

SHE monitoring report 2020:

Country-specific results of Italy The Lombardy region

Schools for Health in Europe Network Foundation

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Schools for Health in Europe



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Background and methodology

The Schools for Health in Europe network foundation (SHE) monitors the implementation of school health promotion in SHE member countries. This country-specific report summarizes the results of the SHE monitoring survey in Italy - Lombardy region. The survey was conducted in September 2020 and the findings represent the perceptions of the SHE regional coordinator on school health promotion and the Health Promoting School (HPS) approach in schools in this region of Italy. The survey is based on existing questionnaires and information sources including the SHE Mapping Survey 2019¹, the SHE Rapid Assessment Tool² and the fifth SHE Factsheet³. The complete survey is available at www.schoolsforhealth.org.

School health promotion and the HPS approach in Italy - Lombardy region

In this report, a distinction is made between **school health promotion** and the **formal HPS approach** in schools. SHE aims to strengthen the formal HPS approach among all schools in the European Region. However, not all schools are formally working according to the HPS approach or are working under the specific HPS label. Despite this, many schools do take efforts to promote the health of their staff and pupils with concrete school health promotion activities.

School health promotion

This relates to various health promotion activities in schools. These activities can focus on multiple health-related themes such as physical activity and mental health, for example in the curriculum or in the policy of the school. This can, but does not necessarily, imply that the school has a structured and systematic plan according to the principles of a formal health promoting school.

Formal HPS approach

According to SHE, the formal HPS approach relates to schools that implement 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. This is characterized as a 'whole school approach' and these schools actively involve pupils, staff and parents in the decision-making and implementation of health promoting interventions in the whole school system.⁴

Many schools in Italy - Lombardy region implement health-related activities. However, the number of schools formally working in accordance to the Health Promoting Schools approach is much lower.

Table 1 reports the estimated percentages of different types of schools involved in school health promotion and working according to the HPS approach in Italy - Lombardy region. Many schools implement health promotion activities. Fewer schools formally work in accordance to the 'whole school approach' defining them as Health Promoting Schools.

Table 1. The estimated percentage of schools involved in school health promotion and working according to the HPS approach in Italy - Lombardy region

Health promotion in schools	% of schools	Health Promoting Schools (HPS)	% of schools
Preschools	<25%	Preschools	<25%
Primary schools	51-75%%	Primary schools	51-75%
Secondary schools	76-99%	Secondary schools	26-50%
Vocational schools	<25%	Vocational schools	<25%

In the Lombardy region in Italy, there are regional guidelines, tools, standards and indicators for schools to support schools in becoming a HPS. The SHE rapid assessment tool and previous edition of the SHE school manual (translated in Italian) are used by schools in the region. The HPS is included in the National and Regional Prevention Plan and therefore does not require additional funding. Finally, there number of schools working according to the HPS, is monitored at a regional level.

The rest of this report summarizes the results of aspects of the HPS approach that are already part of schools in Italy - Lombardy region. These schools are not necessarily formal Health Promoting Schools.

Creating a healthy and supportive environment in schools in Italy - Lombardy region



The HPS approach as defined by SHE, targets the following six components: 1) healthy school policies, 2) the school's physical environment, 3) the school's social environment, 4) individual health skills and action competencies, 5) community links, and 6) health services.

Table 2 shows the implementation of the HPS components in schools in Italy - Lombardy region. It shows that components 1 to 4 are all required and/or recommended by national policies. Further, a combination of measures enhances the link between schools and community stakeholders (component 5) and with local and regional health services (component 6) in many schools in this region of Italy and more specifically in the health promoting schools.

Table 2. The implementation of the Health Promoting School components in Italy - Lombardy region

<p>1. Healthy School Policies </p> <p>Required by national policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The SHE values are part of the schools' approach <p>Recommended by national and regional policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health promotion is part of the schools' educational goals - Schools have a written policy on students' and/or staffs' health and wellbeing - Schools apply a whole school approach to promote health and wellbeing 	<p>2. Physical environment </p> <p>Required by national policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School facilities such as the playgrounds, classrooms, toilets, canteens and corridors are student-friendly, safe, clean and promote hygiene for all students. These are appropriate with regards to students with special needs - School physical activity facilities and canteens follow national safety and hygiene standards - School canteens, food shops and vending machines offer food and drinks that follow national food standards <p>Recommended by regional policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students and staff have access to school facilities for physical activity outside school hours - The routes to schools are safe and designed to encourage students to engage in physical activity (e.g., cycling or walking) - School buildings are kept at a comfortable temperature, are well-lit and ventilated
<p>3. Social environment </p> <p>Required by national policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support services and accommodations are in place at schools for students with special regarding learning, but also developmental and physical needs - Schools have systems for identifying and referring students with special needs to external professionals <p>Recommended by national and regional policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health professionals, social workers or psychologists are involved in individual and whole school health promotion and work together with the school management to integrate health topics into the school curriculum and school policy 	<p>4. Individual skills and action competences </p> <p>Required by national policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Healthy eating is part of daily life in schools <p>Recommended by national policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching/learning methods that enhance mental health and wellbeing are part of daily life in schools - Health literacy and action competence are integral parts of the schools' policies - Schools have clear rules that promote healthy behaviors

Table 2 continued

<p>5. Community Links </p> <p>Applies to most schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools establish connections with local partners such as sport and youth clubs, community or regional health agencies, counselling services, health insurances, local shops, etc. <p>Applies to about half of the schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools arrange for parents of students to become active participants in the school community <p>Applies to less than half of the schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools arrange regular student visits to local partners/stakeholders to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, the development of emotional/ social health, etc. - Schools involve all key people in the community in co-creating health promotion action plans at schools 	<p>6. Health services </p> <p>Applies to about half of the schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health professionals are involved in health promoting activities at a school <p>Applies to less than half of the schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a school doctor available to support students - There is a school nurse available to support students - There is a social worker available to support students - There is a psychologist available to support students - There is a pedagogist available to support students
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SHE core values

The formal HPS approach is based on the five core values³ of equity, sustainability, inclusion, empowerment and democracy. Figure 1 shows the SHE national coordinator’s estimation of SHE core values in schools in the Lombardy region in Italy, measured on a scale from 1 (not reflected at all) to 10 (reflection to the highest degree). The score for all values is 8.2 or higher.

Figure 1. Generalization of the representation of the SHE-core values in schools in Italy - Lombardy region

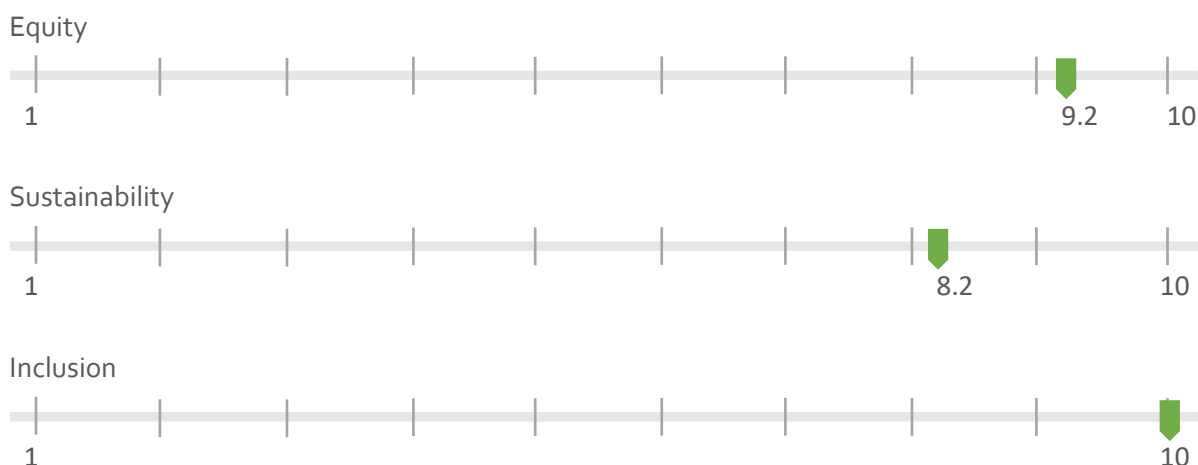
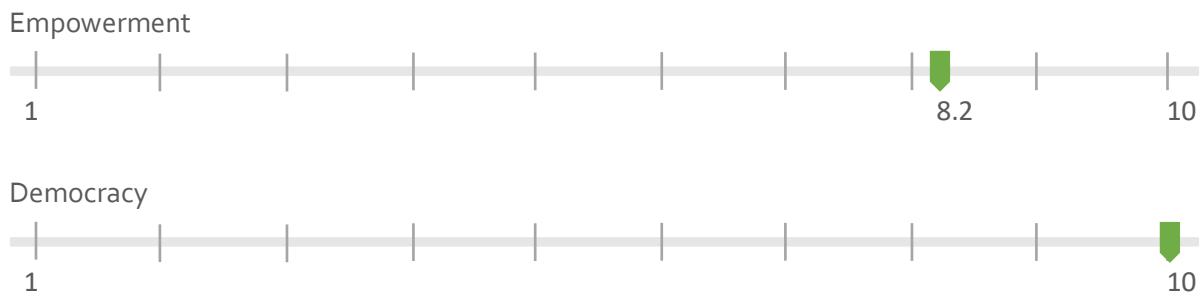


Figure 1 continued



Implementation of health promotion in schools

Schools in the Lombardy region in Italy integrate health promotion in several curricular and non-curricular educational activities and projects, in which subjects are interlinked. Health issues are addressed in more than one subject at a time, creating a holistic approach that integrates health into all aspects of the school. Active learning strategies, such as group discussions, role-plays, workshops and participatory co-creation activities, are used to involve students while addressing health topics in schools. Figure 2 shows the most commonly addressed health promotion issues in schools in this region. The list is quite diverse ranging from lifestyle-related topics such as healthy eating and physical activity, to the prevention of violence and bullying.

Figure 2. Most common HP topics in schools the Lombardy region in Italy



Tailored translation of the HPS approach on seven spectra in schools in the Lombardy region in Italy

The tailored translation of the HPS approach creates a variety of choices regarding the optimal implementation of the HPS approach in a specific context. This variety can be illustrated by seven different spectra. A detailed explanation of each spectrum can be found in the fifth SHE factsheet³. Figure 3 shows the SHE regional coordinator's estimation of the general placement of schools in the region on the seven different spectra.

Figure 3. The Health Promoting School spectra in the Lombardy region in Italy



This refers to the level of involvement of stakeholders (e.g. pupils) in the decision-making and implementation of the HPS approach

Figure 3 continued



The place on the spectrum refers to the number of HPS core-component that are addressed in the HPS-approach



This relates to the development of the new or the adoption of existing interventions resulting from the HPS approach



This relates to the level of disruptiveness of interventions as part of the HPS approach. Non-disruptiveness refers to small changes that can smoothly enter, while disruptiveness means large health promoting changes that can create a positive disruption in the school system.



This relates to the compatibility of interventions within the school curriculum. An intervention can be added-on to the current core curriculum obligations as an additional task, or added-in the current curriculum becoming part of the curriculum without reducing time from core curriculum obligations.



This refers to different types of research designs that can be used to evaluate the HPS approach going from controlled designs with a strong focus on internal validity to action-oriented approaches focusing on external validity and understanding the implementation process in schools.



This refers to the dissemination of the HPS approach at a local level characterized by an optimal fit with each school context, or at national level, reaching more pupils.

Facilitators and barriers to health promotion in schools

An exploration of the important potential barriers for the implementation of health promotion in schools in the Lombardy region in Italy indicated 10 facilitating factors and 5 barriers. These results are reported in table 3.

Table 3. Perceived facilitators and barriers for school health promotion according to the regional coordinator

Facilitators	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration between the health and education sectors, intersectoral collaboration - The national educational policies and curriculum - Support from school management - Participatory processes - Receiving support from the Ministry of Health - Exchange of good practices - Becoming an obligatory school working with health and well-being - Education Training and support for health school coordinators - Country coordinators network - Existence of supporting guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Functioning like volunteers - Health promotion is considered an additional activity - Teachers are or feel overloaded - Actions, good practices and standards should be better defined

COVID-19 pandemic

Since spring 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic drastically altered schools. The government of Italy closed schools during a national lock-down, and students received online education. The HPS Network in Lombardy has supported the schools in promoting health of students, school staff and families at home and in schools. Health promotion activities has been adapted to the new situation. The HPS-model has been adapted to the current situation and many stakeholders recognized the importance of the model. Major challenges were the inequalities between children and the use of active learning methods.

References

1. SHE Mapping survey 2019. Available from: <https://www.schoolsforhealth.org/resources/materials-and-tools/mapping-she>
2. SHE Rapid Assessment Tool. Available from: <https://www.schoolsforhealth.org/resources/materials-and-tools/how-be-health-promoting-school/rapid-assessment-tool>
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Find the coordinators here:

www.schoolsforhealth.org/about-us/member-countries

If your country doesn't have a national coordinator, contact the helpdesk in the SHE secretariat on email: info@schoolsforhealth.org



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