

The Health Promoting Schools Programme

Background

In October 1995 a workshop was convened in Fiji for national coordinators of health-promoting schools in the Pacific. This reflected the strength of the interest among Pacific island countries in this concept since it was initially introduced at a workshop on Health Promotion in Schools in the Pacific Island Countries. The development of health-promoting schools was proposed by the Western Pacific Regional Office of WHO as being directly pertinent to the theme, "Preparation for Life", which was one of three basic themes underlying New horizons in health. This theme related to the Life Stages of infancy, childhood and adolescence. Health-promoting schools were primarily targeted at this group with their concern with the health of children and young people. However, if effective they would also reach into the homes and communities which surrounded schools and would thereby influence the families of these children and young people and the wider communities of which their schools were a part.

The concepts of New horizons in health were adapted to the needs of the Pacific island countries in the Yanuca Island Declaration on Health in the Pacific in the 21st Century, under the Healthy Islands Programme. Under WHO, a Health Promoting School is a school which is constantly strengthening its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working.

More Information - WHO Health Promoting Schools Report 1995

Fiji's Health Promoting Schools Programme

In Fiji the Health Promoting Schools Programme, under the Fiji School's Health Policy, was launched in 2016, and continues to be a key programme under the Ministry of Health & Medical Services and the Ministry of Education.

Watch this clip to see the Fijian Minister of Health talk about the Healthy Initiative for all Fiji Schools Programme... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aM9HFWKV6HO>

Health Promoting Schools in the Pacific

Health Promoting Schools (HPS) aim to improve the health and wellbeing of students through a "whole-of-school" approach. Improving health and well-being is expected to contribute towards improved student educational outcomes.

People can develop life-long habits during their formative years. Children spend as much as half their day in school, and some eat the majority of their meals on school campus during the week. As such, schools across the Pacific have been successful entry points for promoting healthy habits, healthy decision making, and protecting student health through HPS Programmes. Each HPS programme is uniquely tailored to the needs and capacities of each island and each school.

Promoting healthy diets for a healthy future

'The 'no junk food policy' at school has reached home and parents have contacted the school with surprise that children are not asking for sweets when parents go to town but have asked for fruits instead.'

- HPS coordinator, Rabulu Primary School, Fiji

In 84 schools across Fiji, children get a healthy and nutritious lunch each day based on new guidelines for canteens and school grounds. In addition to a focus on healthy diet, many school incinerators have been replaced, and organic waste is composted. All children of HPS schools can now participate in physical education.

These changes are the result of the Fiji HPS programme which covers all nine education districts across the entire country. Educators, school leadership and management, and students have worked with the national HPS focal point from the Ministry of Education to identify priorities and develop action plans using the WHO HPS Framework.

Fiji's School Health Policy 2016 -

<http://www.health.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/School-Health-Policy.pdf>

Goal

To institutionalise wellness in all schools in Fiji through an enabling environment and multisectorial partnership to ensure that children achieve their optimal growth and development.

Objectives

- Wellness activities are supported and implemented in all schools through inclusion in the school curriculum by Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts (MoEHA).
- Integrated approach to School Health Programs (SHPs) within the Ministry of Health & Medical Services' (MoHMS) public health programs.
- Strengthened multi-sectoral collaboration and coordination of wellness activities targeting the health of children in schools

Implementation

- **Healthy Child** - A child who is physically, mentally, emotionally and socially well and can enjoy the highest attainable standard of health.
- **Wellness** - A state of optimal and balanced well-being of body, mind and spirit oriented towards maximising an individual and community's potential at every stage of development.
- **School** - Includes all Early Childhood Education Centres, Special, Primary and Secondary schools and Vocational Centres registered with MoEHA.
- **School Health Programs** – Refers to school health related programs and activities targeting the health, safety and wellbeing of children in schools
- **School Health Team** - A team including, but not limited to, nurses, environmental health officers, oral health officers, dietitians and peer educators that is responsible for planning and implementing school health programs.

School Engagement and the Health Initiative

[Schools recognized for HPS efforts - FBC News](#)

[Education ministry lauds Health Promoting Schools program](#)