The relevance and contributions of education for health and well-being to the advancement of human rights, sustainable development & peace

Thematic paper

This document, prepared by UNESCO Section of Health and Education with the contribution of Kat Watson, is part of several thematic papers developed by UNESCO to inform the Revision of the 1974 Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace.

These papers focus on topics that are not currently covered in the Recommendation but that require greater attention in the revised version in view of ensuring it addresses contemporary challenges to lasting peace.

For more information on the revision visit the dedicated website.

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Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation for peace and sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education, providing global and regional leadership to drive progress, strengthening the resilience and capacity of national systems to serve all learners. UNESCO also leads efforts to respond to contemporary global challenges through transformative learning, with special focus on gender equality and Africa across all actions.

The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.

The relevance and contributions of education for health and well-being to the advancement of human rights, sustainable development & peace

Background

The Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace, and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms adopted in 1974 (hereinafter referred to as 'the 1974 Recommendation') formulates principles and norms for the international regulation of education in support of the advancement of justice, freedom, human rights, sustainable development and peace. It promotes the role of education in eradicating conditions that threaten human survival and well-being and is recognized as a key tool for promoting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Targets 4.7, 12.8 and 13.3 (see Box 1).

Box 1: Targets

Target 4.7: by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

Target 12.8: by 2030 ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature

Target 13.3: Build knowledge and capacity to meet climate change

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The world has changed immeasurably since the adoption of the 1974 Recommendation; widening social and economic inequality, climate change, food insecurity, infectious diseases including HIV, pandemics, biodiversity loss, democratic backsliding, and violence are amongst the 'hallmarks' of the current historical juncture.[1] Further, the world is characterized by interconnectedness - not merely of societies and economies, but also of threats and challenges. HIV and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic illuminated our connectedness and, at the same time, the destabilizing potential of global health phenomena, which exacerbate inequalities both within and between nations. Contemporary threats transcend borders, requiring global responses and transformative, interconnected solutions between people, nations and sectors. In no other era has it been as important as now to nurture generations committed to peace, human rights and sustainable development.

In response to changes and advancements over the past fifty years, understandings of peace and its determinants have evolved significantly. The impacts of conflict and violence on physical and mental health as well as health system infrastructure are well understood, whilst recent global health phenomena illustrate how a lack of access to health and other social services have the potential to

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[1] UNESCO (2021) Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education. Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707.locale=en. Last access 13 April 2022.
UNESCO (2021) Preliminary study related to the technical and legal aspects relating to the desirability of revising the 1974 recommendation. Not available online.

entrench inequality and exclusion which, in turn, drive further conflict and violence.[2] Given its inherent value to those on all sides of conflict and its potential to foster social cohesion, health has been positioned as a 'bridge to peace'.[3] The interconnectedness of peace and health is also reflected in new theories of peace that center people, rather than nation-states, and position the inner peace of individuals as a starting point from which peace radiates out into families, communities and nations. In other words, peace is something that is nurtured, rather than imparted, and dynamic rather than static.

'We know that peace cannot be decreed solely through treaties – it must be nurtured through the dignity, rights and capacities of every man and woman. It is a way of being, of interacting with others, of living on this planet.'[4]

These new understandings of peace require a commitment to the lifelong cultivation of knowledge, skills and competencies that allow individuals to promote their own health and well-being, as well as engage in positive social and cultural relationships. This fits well with a growing - though not yet universal - consensus about education being a transformative force for nurturing engaged citizens, critical thinkers and change agents.

Beyond the individual contributions of education and health to contribute to peace and their status as human rights in and of themselves, there is also growing recognition of the symbiotic relationship that exists between them. **High-quality education enables people to live healthier lives and, in turn, good health and nutrition ensures that learners learn better; indeed, investing in interventions that advance both educational and health-related outcomes may magnify the prospect for peace, human rights and sustainable development outcomes.** Research illustrates, for example, that the promotion of health and well-being in schools is associated with better educational outcomes, and schools that perform well have been shown to have healthier members and communities.[5]During the COVID-19 era, these facts have been strongly evidenced by the negative impact on the health and well-being of millions of children, young people and communities who have been isolated from the protective structures that schools provide, including links to essential health and other protective services.[6] There is an intentional focus on school-based education for health and well-being, though it is recognised that there are many modes of delivering this type of education, including online, non-formal and social education. Given the focus on schools, there is, by default, a focus on young people; however, education for health and well-being is for people of all ages. Beyond research, the mutually-reinforcing potential of education and health and their contributions to peace, human rights and sustainable development have been recognised in several international agreements adopted since the 1974 Recommendation.[7] The 1986 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, for

[2] WHO (No date) WHO Global Health for Peace Initiative. Available at: https://www.who.int/initiatives/who-health-and-peaceinitiative#:~:text=WHO%27s%20Global%20Health%20for%20Peace,peaceful%20relations%20with%20each%20other. Last access 13 April 2022.
[3] WHO (2020) Health and peace initiative. Available at:
https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332938/9789240005792-eng.pdf. Last access 13 April 2022.
[4] Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (2014) High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, convened by the General Assembly. Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2014/09/476992-peace-means-dignity-well-being-all-not-just-absence-war-un-officials#:~:text=Peace%20means%20dignity%2C%20well%2Dbeing,%E2%80%93%20UN%20officials%20%7C%20%7C%20UN%20News. Last accessed 14 April 2022.
[5] Peter Aggleton, Catherine Dennison and Ian Warwick (editors) (2010) Promoting health and well-being through schools. Chris Bonnell, Neil Humphre et al (2014) Why schools should promote students' health and wellbeing. BMJ 348: g3078. Available at: https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3078. Last access 18 April 2022.
[6] UNESCO (2022) Education for Health and Well-Being Strategy 2022 - 2029 (Forthcoming)
[7] See also the Incheon Declaration, WHO European Region 'Health 2020: A European policy framework and strategy for the 21st century, and the Global HIV Strategy 2021 - 2029.

example, recognises education as a fundamental condition for health and clearly links health promotion and peace.[8]

Despite - and, perhaps, because of - all of the changes that have taken place, the 1974 Recommendation remains as relevant today as it was a half-century ago. The changing nature of threats and challenges to peace, human rights and sustainable development as well as the evolution of concepts related to health, education and peace requires a fresh vision and new, globally-oriented solutions. The revision of the 1974 Recommendation is a window of opportunity to articulate a vision for education for health and well-being, and to ensure its explicit inclusion in the revised Recommendation, alongside other forms of transformative education.[9]

What is education for health and well-being?

Transformative education involves teaching and learning - both inside and outside of the classroom and across the life-cycle - geared toward motivating and empowering learners to take informed decisions and actions at the individual, community and global levels.[10] The foundational pillars of transformative approaches to education include: 'learning to know' (knowledge); 'learning to do' (skills and competencies); 'learning to live together' (empathy, mutual understanding), 'learning to be' (development of mind, body and spirit); and 'learning to become with the world' (planetary awareness).[11] 'Education for health and well-being' is a type of transformative education that recognises the mutual-reinforcing nature of education and health, as well as their individual and joint contributions to the global goals of peace, human rights and sustainable development.

Beyond its potential to strengthen health and educational outcomes, education for health and well-being seeks to empower learners to shape their societies for the betterment of the health of both people and planet, fostering responsible citizenship and relationships within local and globally connected communities. It nurtures the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and agency required to address contemporary challenges and builds the 'transversal' competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, empathy and collaboration that allow learners to shape their environments and lives now and into the future.[12] These approaches may be used in a variety of different forms of education that fit under the umbrella of education for health and well-being.

The goals of education for health and well-being complement, encompass and/or intersect with a variety of other forms of transformative education, including global citizenship education; education for sustainable development; social and emotional learning; comprehensive sexuality education; life skills education; human rights education; health promotion in schools; and violence and bullying prevention education. Education for health and well-being is predicated on a conceptualisation of 'health' that extends beyond the mere absence or treatment of disease to include physical, mental and social well-being. Education for health and wellbeing is delivered through a number of interventions, including policies mandating the role of schools in promoting health, curriculum-based approaches, delivery of services in schools (e.g., vaccinations, school meals) and links to the broader community.

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[8] WHO (no date) Health Promotion Action Means. Available at: https://www.who.int/teams/health-promotion/enhanced-wellbeing/first-global-conference/actions. Last access 18 April 2022.

[9] UNESCO (no date) Revision of the 1974 Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation, and peace. Available at: https://en.unesco.org/themes/gced/1974recommendation

[10] See thematic paper entitled 'What can education concretely (and realistically) do to mitigate contemporary threats and foster lasting peace?' for a more detailed discussion of transformative education.

[11] International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (1998) Education for the twenty-first century: issues and prospects. Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000114766. Last access 13 April 2022.
UNESCO (2021) Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education. Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707.locale=en. Last access 13 April 2022.

[12] UNESCO (2022) Education for Health and Well-Being Strategy 2022 - 2029 (Forthcoming)

What contributions does education for health and well-being make to justice, freedom, human rights, sustainable development and peace?

Causal pathways that link education for health and well-being directly with peace, human rights fulfilment, and/or sustainable development are not always abundantly clear in the literature that exists, yet many such pathways take shape intuitively through an understanding of the outcomes that flow from the many forms of education for health and well-being. Young people's ability to establish healthy, mutually-respectful relationships with others translates to more peaceful schools, communities and nations. Empowering (young) people to harness their potential to enact change leads to more engaged, active citizenry who demand the respect, protection and fulfilment of their own and others' human rights. Transforming gender and other social norms that disadvantage those with less power and privilege creates more equal, inclusive and tolerant societies which, in turn, foster peace. Fulfilling people's right to health within schools allows people to harness their innovative spirits for sustainable development and promotes the cohesion between people and with the planet necessary for peace. And, when schools model the peace, rights-respecting, sustainable environments in which we all wish to live, it is aspirational for learners, communities and nations.
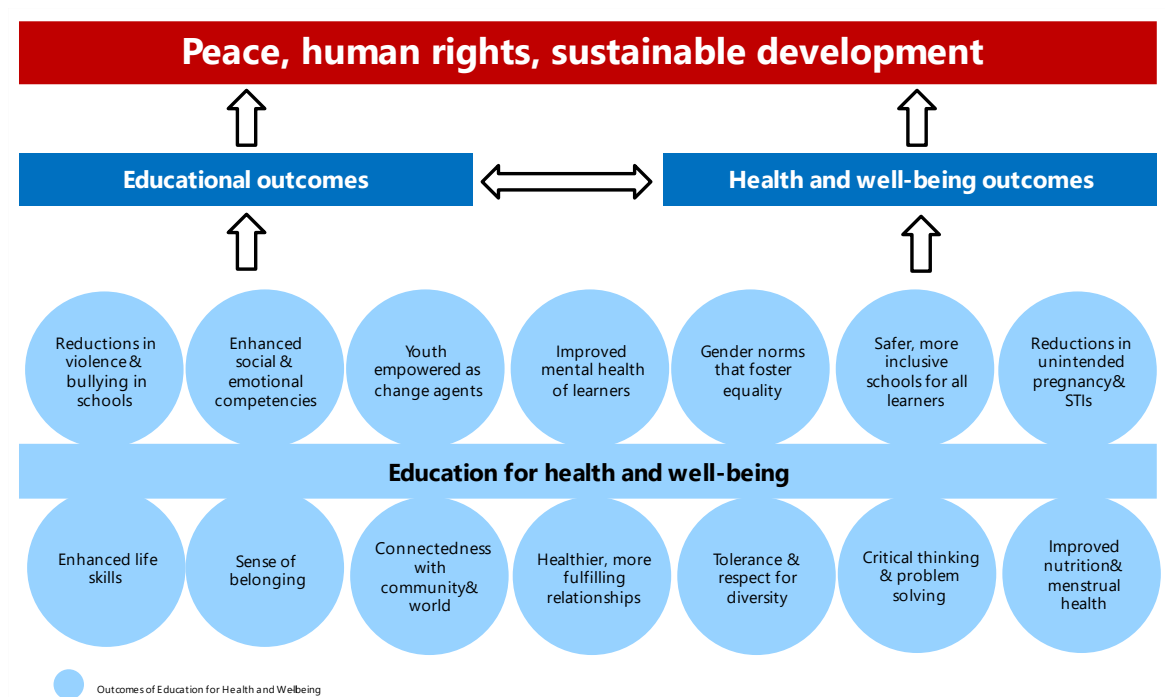
Nurturing the 'transversal' social and emotional competencies essential to peace

It is only in the past few decades that 'soft skills' such as empathy and compassion have been recognized as just as important, if not more so, than academic knowledge and skills within the education sector. They are necessary for building social relationships and functioning in a complex social world, and schools are an ideal place to reach the majority of children from a young age.[13] Not

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[13]Shelley Hymel & Lina Darwich (2018) Building peace through education, Journal of Peace Education, 15:3, 345-357, DOI: 10.1080/17400201.2018.1535475
Interview with Roberto Parada, Western Sydney University

only have social and emotional skills been shown to improve educational achievement but they also are linked to long-term, positive outcomes in relation to physical and mental health, income, employment, relationships and criminality.[14] In a school setting, nurturing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills and responsible decision-making has also been linked to decreases in interpersonal violence and improvements in student relationships and attitudes toward school.[15]

> **'Having spent several years studying bullying in schools from various perspectives, I am of the opinion that when young people acquire [social and emotional competencies] they are actually acquiring not just fundamental skills which may lead to peace, but also fundamental skills that are part of peace itself.'[16]**

Education for health and well-being, as well as other forms of transformative education, are characterized by a focus on nurturing the social and emotional competencies needed to navigate a range of domains, from family, relationships and sex to conflict resolution, mental health and stress. Equipped with an understanding of how one's own behavior impacts others and the planet fosters healthy 'ecosystems of relationships.'[17] These social and emotional competencies become foundational to achieving peace, which is born out of the health and well-being of individuals and of their relationships to self, others and the environment.[18]

Empowering (young) people to affect change for the advancement of peace, human rights and sustainable development

Education for health and well-being goes beyond learning *about*, to learning *through* and *for*. In other words, there is an emphasis on the process of learning (e.g. how and where it takes place), which must reflect the values being imparted, and the skills, attitudes and agency needed to enact those values in their own lives.[19] This cuts to the heart of the transformative potential of education for health and well-being, whereby empowered people feel equipped to create, innovate and collaborate in the face of challenges and obstacles to broader, global goals related to health and well-being and, in turn, to peace, human rights and sustainable development.

Whilst the focus on empowerment is critical to learners' ability to take action for the changes that they wish to affect, it also impacts their own well-being by supporting their sense of belonging in their context and their contribution to larger, shared goals. Defined holistically, 'well-being' includes having a sense of purpose or meaning in life.[20] Fostering well-being is particularly important during adolescence, which is a 'critical period of the life course when many of the factors that contribute to lifelong well-being are, or are not, acquired or solidified.'[21] Whilst there is great diversity amongst

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[14] Cahill, H., Dadvand, B., Walter-Cruickshank, E., & Shlezinger, K. (2019). An Integrated Approach to Educating for Social and Emotional Learning, Gender Education and Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Melbourne: Youth Research Centre. Available at: https://education.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/3190193/RFQ01804-YRC_ResearchReport-SocialEmotionalLearnin_Final.pdf . Last accessed 18 April 2022.

[15] Shelley Hymel & Lina Darwich (2018) Building peace through education, Journal of Peace Education, 15:3, 345-357, DOI: 10.1080/17400201.2018.1535475

[16] Roberto Parada (No date) Social emotional learning and peace. Available at: https://mgiep.unesco.org/article/social-emotional-learning-and-peace . Last accessed 18 April 2022.

[17] Interview: Henrique Lopes, ASPHER

[18] Interview: Roberto Parada, Western Sydney University

[19] See COE: 'Introducing human rights education', Available at: https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/introducing-human-rights-education#:~:text=Article%2026%20of%20the%20Universal,human%20rights%20and%20fundamental%20freedoms. Last access 13 April 2022.

[20] Interview: Roberto Parada, Western Sydney University

[21] Ross DA, Hinton R, Melles-Brewer M, et al. Adolescent Well-Being: A Definition and Conceptual Framework. J Adolesc Health. 2020;67(4):472-476. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.06.042

adolescents and well-being is not defined in the same way globally, there is clear evidence that all adolescents need to feel connected to positive social networks; participate socially, culturally and civically according to their evolving capacities; maintain good health and optimum nutrition; and be empowered with the skills needed and opportunities to contribute to change in their respective societies.[22]

Transforming gender norms that stymie freedom, justice and human rights

Research on women, peace and security shows that gender equality is associated with more peaceful, stable societies.[23] Gender norms that lead to *inequality* are learnt from a young age and reinforced across the life cycle; these can disadvantage women and other gender diverse groups of people, resulting in a range of negative educational and health outcomes, including sexual and gender-based violence, unintended pregnancy, child marriage and poor mental health.

Evidence shows that some forms of education for health and well-being such as comprehensive sexuality education, violence prevention education, and respectful relationships education have the potential to transform gender norms and, in the process, promote the human rights of women, girls and gender diverse groups. These types of education utilise participatory explorations of how norms are socially constructed and the impact they have on people of different genders; learners are encouraged to become 'critically reflexive agents' who shape gender norms and contribute to the expansion of human rights, equality and acceptance of sexual and gender diversity.[24] Their understandings of how gender norms play out in societies - including in the family, in (sexual) relationships, and in institutions - fosters critical thinking and personal reflections on power. These, in turn, lead to improved tolerance levels, healthier relationships and less violence towards women and people who identify as LGBTI - all of which promote peace and human rights.[25]

> **'Schools can be highly effective places to promote gender equity, and to support students to understand how gender plays out in attitudes and behaviors, including violence.'** [26]

Further, addressing issues of gender and power has been shown to increase the efficacy of education for health and well-being programmes five fold in relation to certain health outcomes, including sexually transmitted infections and reduction of unintended pregnancy.[27] Advancing sexual and reproductive health in this manner is not only a fulfilment of human rights, but it is also central to

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[22] Ross DA, Hinton R, Melles-Brewer M, et al. Adolescent Well-Being: A Definition and Conceptual Framework. J Adolesc Health. 2020;67(4):472-476. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.06.042

[23]Catalina Crespo-Sancho (2018) Can gender equality prevent violent conflict? Available at: https://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/can-gender-equality-prevent-violent-conflict. Last accessed 18 April 2022.

[24] Cahill, H., Dadvand, B., Walter-Cruickshank, E., & Shlezinger, K. (2019). An Integrated Approach to Educating for Social and Emotional Learning, Gender Education and Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Melbourne: Youth Research Centre. Available at: https://education.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/3190193/RFQ01804-YRC_ResearchReport-SocialEmotionalLearnin_Final.pdf . Last accessed 18 April 2022.
See also Bragg 2018; Neary, 2016; Yu et al, 2017; ITGSE

[25] Interview: Didier Jourdan, Professor, Clermont-Auvergne University; Chair Holder of the UNESCO Chair "Global Health and Education"; and Head of the WHO Collaborating Centre for "Research in Education and Health"

[26] Cahill, H., Dadvand, B., Walter-Cruickshank, E., & Shlezinger, K. (2019). An Integrated Approach to Educating for Social and Emotional Learning, Gender Education and Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Melbourne: Youth Research Centre. Available at: https://education.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/3190193/RFQ01804-YRC_ResearchReport-SocialEmotionalLearnin_Final.pdf . Last accessed 18 April 2022.

[27] Haberland 2015; Haberland and Rogow 2014

peacebuilding, given that it ensures women's free and equal participation in processes aimed at securing peace.[28]

There is also extensive evidence to show that approaches to gender norms transformation that extend beyond classroom learning and strive to create safe, inclusive learning environments that are free from (gender-based) violence and bullying are successful.[29] Skills-building to prevent (gender-based) violence and bullying can also protect against other issues that affect learning, including drug or alcohol misuse.[30] Both as educational institutions and work places, schools are ideal environments with which to challenge harmful gender norms that tolerate (gender-based) violence and to catalyze generational and cultural change for violence free futures.[31]

Fulfilling the right to health and well-being of learners

School systems are seen as a 'smart' way for countries to improve health and education, given enrolment levels globally. They provide an ideal and cost-effective setting for preventive interventions, including in relation to non-communicable diseases linked with unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use and harmful use of alcohol.[32] Research illustrates that health promotion in schools is associated with better educational outcomes, and schools that perform well have been shown to have healthier members and communities.[33] During the COVID-19 era, these facts have been strongly evidenced by the negative impact on the health and well-being of millions of children, young people and communities who have been isolated from the protective structures that schools provide, including essential health and other protective services.[34] Beyond promoting learners' and communities' right to health and well-being, ensuring equal access to health and social protective services in and through schools improves prospects for stability and social cohesion.

Poor health often intersects with poverty, food insecurity, conflict and gender norms, all of which affect equal access to education. Comprehensive school health and nutrition programmes can address inequalities and marginalization by addressing young people's intersecting vulnerabilities simultaneously and supporting a sense of belonging to the school and wider communities. Various health promotion programmes in schools, including malaria prevention, school meal provision and hand washing programmes, have all been shown to reduce absenteeism and/or increase enrolment rates amongst young people.[35] Enhancing water, sanitation and hygiene services in school, as well as

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[28] Sara E Davies and Sophie Harman (2020) Securing Reproductive Health: A Matter of International Peace and Security. International Studies Quarterly, Volume 64, Issue 2, June 2020, Pages 277–284, https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqaa020

[29] UNESCO (Forthcoming) Education for health and well-being strategy 2022 - 2029.
See also Our Watch (2021) Respectful relationships education in schools. Available at: https://media-cdn.ourwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/29130252/RRE-Evidence-paper-accessible-100321.pdf . Last accessed 18 April 2022.

[30] WHO (2019) School based violence prevention: A Handbook. Available at:
https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/324930 . Last accessed 18 April 2022.
Our Watch (2021) Respectful relationships education in schools. Available at: https://media-cdn.ourwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/29130252/RRE-Evidence-paper-accessible-100321.pdf . Last accessed 18 April 2022.

[31] WHO (2019) School based violence prevention: A Handbook. Available at: https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/324930 . Last accessed 18 April 2022.
Our Watch (2021) Respectful relationships education in schools. Available at: https://media-cdn.ourwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/29130252/RRE-Evidence-paper-accessible-100321.pdf . Last accessed 18 April 2022.

[32] UNESCO (Forthcoming) Education for health and well-being strategy 2022 - 2029.

[33] Peter Aggleton, Catherine Dennison and Ian Warwick (editors) (2010) Promoting health and well-being through schools.
Chris Bonnell, Neil Humphre et al (2014) Why schools should promote students' health and wellbeing. BMJ 348: g3078.
Available at: https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3078. Last access 18 April 2022.

[34] UNESCO (Forthcoming) Education for health and well-being strategy 2022 - 2029

[35] WHO (2021) Link between education and well-being never clearer, UN pushes for 'health-promoting' schools. Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/06/1094552 . Last accessed 18 April 2022.

educating on menstrual hygiene, means that girls are less likely to miss school while menstruating.[36] The evidence clearly illustrates that schools can be a place not only for learning about health and well-being but, also, are crucial entry points for directly addressing intersecting issues related to education, food security, nutrition and health - all of which promote human rights and are critical to peace.[37]

Providing comprehensive sexuality education alongside health services through schools is one of the most promising developments in ensuring the sexual and reproductive health of young people.[38] In addition to young people having a right to receive information related to their sexual and reproductive health, promoting it through education for health and well-being has a direct impact on their education and futures, given that, for example, unintended pregnancy can increase the risk of absenteeism, poor academic attainment and drop-out for young mothers and also has negative implications for young fathers.[39]

> **'One of the most promising developments in ensuring the sexual and reproductive health of young people is in multicomponent programmes which offer school-based sexuality education alongside community- or health-service-based services. Some reports suggest that the biggest impacts are seen when school-based programmes are augmented with community elements, including training for health providers to deliver youth-friendly services, condom distribution, and involving parents and teachers'[40]**

Education for health and well-being also addresses the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality, enabling young people to develop respectful relationships and consider the well-being of others in their decision-making processes. All of this cultivates the peace at the individual level needed to foster social cohesion and peace within schools and the wider community.

Nurturing environments that mirror global aspirations for peace, human rights and sustainable development

The International Commission on the Futures of Education has emphasized that 'education must aim to unite us around collective endeavours and provide the knowledge, science, and innovation needed to shape sustainable futures for all anchored in social, economic, and environmental justice. It must redress past injustices while preparing us for environmental, technological, and social changes on the horizon.'[41] This starts with the school environment. As microcosms of the wider societies within which they are situated, schools have the potential to 'grow' peace, human rights and sustainable development, constructing and experimenting with what is possible in any given context.[42] In relation to health and well-being specifically, schools can nurture ecosystems - both

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[36] WHO (2021) Link between education and well-being never clearer, UN pushes for 'health-promoting' schools. Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/06/1094552 . Last accessed 18 April 2022.

[37] FAO (2020) School-based food and nutrition education: A white paper on the current state, principles, challenges and recommendations for low-and middle-income countries. Available at: https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb2064en/. Last accessed 18 April 2022.

[38] Paul Montgomery and Wendy Knerr (2017) Review of the Evidence on Sexuality Education: Report to inform the update of the UNESCO International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education. Available at: https://healtheducationresources.unesco.org/library/documents/review-evidence-sexuality-education-report-inform-update-unesco-international . Last accessed 18 April 2022.

[39] UNESCO (Forthcoming) Education for health and well-being strategy 2022 - 2029.

[40] Paul Montgomery and Wendy Knerr (2017) Review of the Evidence on Sexuality Education: Report to inform the update of the UNESCO International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education. Available at: https://healtheducationresources.unesco.org/library/documents/review-evidence-sexuality-education-report-inform-update-unesco-international . Last accessed 18 April 2022.

[41] UNESCO (2021) Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education. Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707.locale=en. Last access 18 April 2022.

[42] Interview: Roberto Parada, Western Sydney University

within and outside of their walls - wherein learners not only *learn about* health and well-being but, also, *experience* health and well-being in their daily lives.

Proposed revisions to the 1974 Recommendation

Building peaceful, rights-respecting, sustainable societies starts by nurturing their determinants within individuals, schools and communities. Cultivating strong social and emotional competencies lays the foundations for respect and understanding between peoples and nations. Empowering people to take action for the advancement of human rights is the impetus for freer, more just societies. Transforming norms related to equality and rights from a young age leads to more inclusive, peaceful societies. Ensuring equal access in schools and their wider communities to protective health and nutrition services not only promotes human rights but, also, ensures the social cohesion required to build peace. Providing truly transformative education for health and well-being, schools create the conditions that mirror global aspirations for peace, human rights and sustainable development.

Across many forms of transformative education, the same skills and competencies apply. However, given the well-established linkages between health and peace; education and peace; and health and education, individuals must learn to apply these skills and competencies to their own health, as well as the health of others and the planet. Given the myriad of health-related challenges that have arisen since 1974 and continue to threaten human survival and well-being, education for health and well-being is an imperative in the next iteration of the Recommendation.

This section provides a range of recommendations for revising the 1974 Recommendation. These follow the proposed sections provided in the working version of the revised Recommendation.

Preamble

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization …

- Recognizes that health is a human right that is integrally linked with peace. Global health phenomena such as HIV and the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbate inequalities within and between States which, in turn, serve as drivers of conflict. Conflict and violence have a grave impact on physical and mental health whilst also disrupting vital health system infrastructure. Given its inherent value to all human beings and its potential to foster social cohesion, health acts as a bridge to peace. Positive peace requires the cultivation of knowledge, skills and competencies through lifelong education that allow individuals to promote their own health and well-being as well as to engage in the positive social and cultural relationships central to peace.

- *Suggest a more general recognition of how concepts of peace have evolved and are more focused on people and cultures of peace*

- *Suggest a more general recognition of the evolving role of education in cultivating 'soft skills' required to confront challenges and threats in the 21st century*

Scope of application

- Suggest a definition of transformative education and, within it, possible mention specifically of education for health and well-being as one type

Aims

- To motivate and empower learners of all ages to take informed decisions and action at the individual, community and global level to transform societies and institutions towards a just, equal, healthy, democratic, sustainable and peaceful world.[43] This notably implies ensuring education connects with the natural, political, economic and cultural contexts. This also implies ensuring learners feel included, valued, acknowledged, safe and invited to engage with the learning community as full members and thus, paying greater attention to the quality of the learning environment and school climate as well as **to learners' health and well-being** (addition in bold).

Guiding principles

The following should be regarded as major guiding principles of educational policy:

- Safe, healthy schools and environments for learners should model global aspirations for peace through the promotion of freedom, justice, equality and human rights.

- Schools and other educational institutions have the potential to fulfill learners' right to health through the provision of health and nutritional services as well as education for health and well-being.

- A commitment to nurturing social and emotional competencies is needed for navigating modern day threats to peace and for ensuring international cooperation and understanding

- Education has a prominent role to play in the transformation of gender and other social norms that disadvantage and harm women and other, marginalized groups of people

Action areas

Action Area 1: Strengthen the capacities of education systems
- Member States should integrate health and well-being into education sector plans, policies, strategies and resource allocations, as well as school health policies and plans

- Member States should support every school to become a health promoting school through the application of the whole school approach.

- Member States should strengthen education sector capacity to prevent and address all forms of school-related violence, including bullying, cyberbullying and gender-based violence, including through advancing knowledge on the scope and drivers of school violence and bullying, including as relates to gender, sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, ethnicity, socio-economic status or disability/health status

Action Area 2: Preparing learners of all ages and throughout life to build sustainable, just, healthy and peaceful societies
- Member States should strengthen education sector capacity to prevent noncommunicable disease (NCD) through the promotion of healthy eating and drinking practices, physical activity and sports, and education to prevent and address harmful substance use

- Member States should advance efforts to promote the mental health and well-being of learners,

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[43] As per the Declaration and integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human rights, and Democracy, adopted at the 28th session of UNESCO's General Conference, 1995

including through social and emotional learning and strategies and skills for self-care.

- Member States should prepare learners with the knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and behaviours for healthy, respectful and gender-equitable relationships.

- Member States should support children in their transition to adolescence, including through puberty education and social emotional learning.

- Member States should strengthen the quality of comprehensive sexuality education curricula and delivery, including through support for teacher training and development.

Action Area 3: Creating safe and supportive learning environments
- Member States should promote diversity and inclusion, eliminating stigma and discrimination towards learners and educators as well as by promoting accessible and inclusive school facilities that are child, disability and gender-sensitive.

Action Area 4: Enabling teachers, educators and education providers to deliver relevant education

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

- Suggest measurements of learner health and well-being be integrated into education monitoring and evaluation frameworks

Acknowledgements

Annex: Country case study

Case study: Scotland's approach to health and well-being in schools

Scotland has shown commitment to promoting health and well-being (HWB) in schools, including the provision of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education. This commitment is grounded in a strong national policy and guidance for schools. Its curriculum reform in 2010, Curriculum for Excellence, placed HWB, along with literacy and numeracy, as one of the three core areas of children's learning. Health and well-being isn't a single subject or class, but is organized into seven areas:

- mental, emotional, social and physical well-being
- planning for choices and changes
- physical education
- physical activity and sport
- food and health
- substance misuse
- relationships, sexual health and parenthood

Each of these areas is integrated into the curriculum, as well as reflected in broader school culture and practice. For example, relationships education is not just about teaching students about positive relationships skills, but also about developing a positive whole school ethos and culture.

Source: UNESCO (2021*) The journey towards comprehensive sexuality education: Global Status Report*. Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379607.

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The relevance and contributions of education for health and well-being to the advancement of human rights, sustainable development & peace

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