Call for expression of interest for consultancy to conduct systematic reviews on health promoting schools

1. Purpose of the Consultancy
The World Health Organization (WHO) seeks a senior expert consultant or a team of consultants to conduct two systematic evidence reviews: one review to inform the global standards for health promoting schools, and another review to inform their implementation guidance. The consultant(s) will work closely with the WHO/UNESCO steering group to develop and finalize the methods for the systematic reviews and write up key findings and recommendation. The incumbent will be responsible for the objectives and deliverables detailed below, to be accomplished from 15 July 2019 to 15 December 2019.

2. Project description
WHO and UNESCO launched a new initiative to “Make Every School a Health Promoting School” through the development of Global Standards for Health Promoting Schools, and Implementation Guidance for the Global Standards. Schools are among the most strategic places to positively influence the health of children and young people, and a healthy school environment can be the foundation for a lifetime of healthy living. The Health Promoting Schools (HPS) initiative has been recognized as an important vehicle to promote positive development and healthy behaviours such as physical activity, balanced nutrition, prevent tobacco use, and prevent bullying (Langford et al., 2014).

Although the concept of HPS was articulated by WHO, UNESCO and UNICEF back in 1992 (WHO/UNESCO/UNICEF 1992), to date, only a few countries have successfully implemented HPS at scale. One reason might be that the concept of HPS was promoted as an aspiration, with initiatives usually relying on the interest and readiness of individual schools to become involved (McIsaac et al. 2017). Cultural and structural barriers between the health and the education sectors have been recognized as important impediments for the optimal implementation of HPS (WHO 2015). To help address these barriers, WHO convened an expert meeting in 2015 in Bangkok and identified key areas for improvement. One of the identified priorities was establishing systems for collecting better data, monitoring, reporting, providing evidence and utilizing evidence to make policy and implementation plans (WHO 2015).

The time is right to review lessons learned from more than 25 years of implementing the HPS initiative. WHO, along with 6 other UN partners, recently issued a guidance that strongly recommends that “every school should be a health promoting school” (WHO 2017). A standards-driven approach towards the implementation of this recommendation, and strengthening the role of school health services, will therefore accelerate global progress.
3. Scope of work to be performed

WHO and UNESCO are seeking support to review the published and grey literature (at least in English, French and Spanish) to identify current recommendations by WHO, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, FRESH partnership and national governments related to health promotion, prevention, protection and care in school settings to inform global standards for health promoting schools, and their implementation guidance.

The 2 reviews are separate outputs. The first review covers the norms/standards/policies/programmes and recommendations on health promoting schools and related areas as endorsed by WHO, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, FRESH partnership and national normative documents. The second review covers specifically the implementation aspects/experiences/mechanisms to apply these norms/standards/policies/programmes on health promoting schools and related areas in school settings. The results of the first review will inform the development of global standards for health promoting schools, and the results of the second review will inform the development of advice on implementation.

The 2 reviews are described below separately.

Details of the assignments

A set questions were developed to guide the systematic reviews

Regarding the systematic review on standards, the research should answer the following questions:

1. What are the current recommendations by the above-mentioned entities related to **school policies** that contribute to better health and educational outcomes?
   - What indicators are proposed and/or used to measure the process/outcome/impact of the recommendations?
2. What are the current recommendations by the above-mentioned entities related to the **school physical environment** that contribute to better health and educational outcomes?
   - What indicators are proposed and/or used to measure the process/outcome/impact of the recommendations?
3. What are the current recommendations by the above-mentioned entities related to the **school social environment/ethos** that contribute to better health and educational outcomes?
   - What indicators are proposed and/or used to measure the process/outcome/impact of the recommendations?
4. What are the current recommendations by the above-mentioned entities related to the **content of the school curriculum** that contribute to better health and educational outcomes?
   - What indicators are proposed and/or used to measure the process/outcome/impact of the recommendations?
5. What are the current recommendations by the above-mentioned entities related to the **involvement of parents and wider community** in health promotion and prevention?
   - What indicators are proposed and/or used to measure the process/outcome/impact of the recommendations?
6. What are the current recommendations by the above-mentioned entities related to the **provision of school-based or school-linked health services**?
   - What indicators are proposed and/or used to measure the process/outcome/impact of the recommendations?
7. For each of the above, to what extent are the recommendations supported by evidence?
8. For each of the above, are there specific considerations related to country **income level** (e.g. low-, middle- and high-income countries)?

9. For each of the above, are there specific considerations related to countries in **humanitarian or fragile situations**?

The following tasks will be considered in the scope of work:

- Develop and finalize questions for the systematic review.
- Develop and finalize the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the documents that will be searched for.
- Develop search strategies, search relevant bibliographic databases or sources of grey literature, and identify documents that meet the inclusion criteria
- Locate full-text documents for potential inclusion
- Prepare an electronic library of documents included in the review
- Prepare a report of the systematic review(s)
- Provide written responses to comments from the WHO/UNESCO steering group or from peer reviewers on the systematic review.

We expect that reviewed sources will include at least WHO guidelines as well as other relevant documents by WHO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, World Bank, FRESH partnership, articles in peer reviewed journals and national normative documents related to health promoting schools.

Regarding the systematic review on the implementation aspects/experiences/mechanisms to apply these norms/standards/policies/programmes, the research should answer the following questions:

1. **What are the most important factors (enablers or barriers) that need to be taken into consideration in preparing and planning for HPS?**
   - At national level
   - At school level

2. **What are the most important factors (enablers or barriers) that need to be taken into consideration in ensuring policy and institutional anchoring**\(^1\) **of HPS initiatives?**
   - At national level
   - At school level

3. **What are the most important learning and management practices** that may enable or hinder the uptake and sustainability of HPS initiatives?
   - At national level
   - At school level

4. **What are the most important factors in the school physical environment** that may enable or hinder the uptake and sustainability of HPS initiatives?

5. **What are the most important factors in the school social environment** that may enable or hinder the uptake and sustainability of HPS initiatives?

6. **What are the most important factors related to student participation** that may enable or hinder the uptake and sustainability of HPS initiatives?

7. **What are the most important factors related to the involvement of parents and the wider community** that may enable or hinder the uptake and sustainability of HPS initiatives?

\(^1\) i.e. the extent to which educational national and local policies are conducive to implement HPS initiatives, and/or vice-versa, the extent to which HPS interventions are included, and communicated, as part of educational policies, processes and institutional mechanisms.
8. What are the most important conditions that facilitate and ensure the long-term sustainability of the initiative and the implementation of agreed actions for change?

9. What are the most important conditions that facilitate intersectoral working between the two key ministries, MOH and MOE?

10. For all of the above, are there specific considerations related to country income level (e.g. low-income, middle-income countries, high-income countries)?

11. For all of the above, are there specific considerations related to countries in humanitarian or fragile situations?

The following tasks will be considered in the scope of work:

- Develop and finalize the questions for the systematic review
- Develop and finalize the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the documents that will be searched for.
- Develop search strategies, search relevant bibliographic databases or sources of grey literature, and identify studies that meet inclusion criteria
- Locate full-text documents of studies for potential inclusion
- Prepare an electronic library of studies included in the review
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- Provide written responses to comments from the WHO/UNESCO steering group or from peer reviewers on the systematic review.

We expect that reviewed sources will include at least WHO guidelines as well as other relevant documents by WHO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, World Bank, FRESH partnership, articles in peer reviewed journals, national normative documents related to health promoting schools, and information from key informants on implementation aspects.

4. Technical Supervision
The selected consultant(s) will work under the supervision of the Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health technical officer who co-leads the WHO/UNESCO steering group.

5. Timelines
Start date: 15 July 2019 End date: 15 December 2019

6. Work effort
Estimated 69 person/days

7. Qualifications and experience required
- Essential: Demonstrated experience in conducting systematic literature reviews on complex interventions in key databases leading to publications in highly-regarded scientific journals, WHO guidelines or the Cochrane Library.
- Essential: Demonstrated experience in assessing the quality of the evidence and levels of effectiveness of health interventions
- Essential: Demonstrated experience in assessing the literature on implementation science
- Desirable: Knowledge of health promotion, child and adolescent health, and/or school health is an asset.

8. Language requirements
- Ability to analyze literature in English, French and Spanish
Proficiency in written and oral communication in English

9. How to apply
The application should include:
1. a motivation letter highlighting why the interested candidate(s) is(are) suitable to undertake the assignment
2. Description of the research team and related CV(s), including a list of relevant publications
3. A brief outline and description of the planned methods to conduct the two reviews

10. Deadline for applications
All applications must be sent to: baltagy@who.int copy benabelazizf@who.int, healthpromotion@who.int by 15th July 2019.

Only successful applicants will be contacted.