

Network Objectives

The general objective of the Network on Health Education Research is to provide an interdisciplinary forum to continuously explore and critically discuss dynamic relations between education and health, contribute to conceptual development as well as empirically-based evidence for the schools for health approach across Europe, and play a part in enhancing the knowledge base within educational research in a broader sense.

The main overall research field includes education, learning and health promotion in schools. Health is considered as multidimensional concept, including mental, emotional and social aspects, in addition to the physical dimension. Also, health is viewed as a positive concept encompassing wellbeing and quality of life, rather than solely absence of disease in bio-medical terms. Finally, health is seen to be determined in places where people live, learn, work and play. This refers to a critical ecological approach to health promotion and education, looking not only at the health of individuals, but at socio-economic determinants of health. The schools for health research network endorses research with schools as settings (or systems), educational practices and supporting mechanisms related to health improvement in a broad sense. The research area is wide: it includes critical research of the links between curriculum, the school physical and social environment, teacher competences, supportive school management and policy structures on the one hand, and learning outcomes and pupils' health on the other.

Attention is placed on research that challenges traditional discourses of health education/promotion in schools, which focus narrowly on pupils' knowledge, skills and behaviour. Instead, the research endorsed within this network tends to critically explore socio-cultural and other contextual determinants (on micro, meso and/or macro level) that influence learning processes and health promotion in schools. Further, the network encourages research that examines the potentials and barriers related to utilizing local communities as extended classrooms and establishing sustainable school-community partnerships which aim at health improvement through education, but also at better education through health. In this way, the network engages with wider educational issues such as participatory pedagogies, community partnerships, professional competences and sustainable learning outcomes.

The research fields of this network relates to other EERA Networks, such as Network 25 (Children Rights in Education), and Network 20 (Innovative intercultural learning environments). A particular distinguishing characteristic of this network is the emphasis on the dialectic links between learning and health, that is, between educational processes and outcomes on the one hand, and health-promotion processes and outcomes on the other.