

Chapter 9

Health Schools in Spain: Health Promotion at the Regional Level to Advance Sustainable Development Goal 3

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ABSTRACT

In 2015, the United Nations adopted 17 major Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address current economic, social, and environmental challenges. Governments play a key role in achieving the SDGs through advocacy, awareness, and regulation. In this work, the authors focus on SDG 3, “Guarantee a Healthy Life and Promote Well-Being for All Ages.” Specifically, the articulation of citizen participation for health promotion in health schools is reviewed. They have been selected by choosing four schools and a Spanish entity that show how health education can facilitate the development of citizen participation in the field of health. The health schools and their corresponding training programs show the multiplicity of ways that citizens acquire access to the health field, ranging from information to decision-making in the system.

1. INTRODUCTION

The formulation of SDG 3 (“Guarantee a healthy life and promote well-being for all at all ages”) expresses that health is a good that must be achieved because of the value it represents in itself. However, the Agenda reminds us that health is also a mean to achieve other goals and a reliable indicator of global progress towards sustainable development (World Health Organization, 2015). Health is one of the pil-

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lars of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Therefore, promoting health is essential for the achievement of the SDGs. In November 2016, the Ninth World Conference on Health Promotion was held in Shanghai, organized by the Government of China and the World Health Organization, culminating in the Shanghai Declaration on Health Promotion in the 2030 Agenda. for Sustainable Development. The Conference showed the close link between health and sustainable development with the aim of sensitizing national governments, municipal leaders and other social agents about the enormous potential to promote health in all sectors of society. The Shanghai Declaration emphasizes the need to implement local health policies that promote social inclusion, the integration of health into municipal policies, as well as promoting community collaboration to promote health and reorient municipal health and social services towards equity and universal health coverage.

According to the World Health Organization, health promotion allows people to have greater control of their own development. It encompasses a wide range of social and environmental interventions aimed at benefiting and protecting individual health and quality of life by preventing and solving the root causes of health problems without focusing solely on treatment and cure (Camarellas, 2020). Health promotion has three essential components:

- Good health governance, requires that policy makers in all government departments make health a central aspect of their policy. This means that they must consider health implications in all their decisions, and prioritize policies that prevent people from getting sick or injured.
- Health education is as a fundamental element, since it facilitates the participation of people not only to acquire knowledge, skills and information, but also attitudes, behavior and ethics values that allow them to choose healthy options and to be patient autonomous (León Correa, 2008). Indeed, the inclusion of a basic training subject in Health Education in the curriculum of the Degree in Early Childhood Education has contributed to a better perception of the knowledge and skills necessary to develop Health Promotion and Education strategies at school (Torres-García and Santana-Hernández, 2017). However, some researchers highlights that health education as a cross-cutting theme in the Spanish educational curriculum requires efforts from families, caregivers and social agents to turn into an efficient Health Promotion tool. Therefore, to be systematically and widely integrated into the curricular projects of all schools requires including effective practices, through innovation and investigation activities (Gavó et al., 2008; Gavidia, 2009).
- Healthy cities, the local level plays a leading role in promoting good health. This model has emphasized public policies and transcends community activities and isolated intersectoral projects, beyond the state or government focus, differing with other models and theories such as Franco highlights (Franco, 2006). Specifically, individual and neighborhoods socio-economic status, which are explained through theories like Pierre Bourdieu's capital interaction theory (Frohlich and Abel, 2014) or others Health Theories such as Life Course Theory, Link and Phelan Fundamental Cause Theory, Social Capital or Health Lifestyle Theory (these last two highly related to the previous paragraph) (Cockerham, Hamby and Oates, 2017), are factors to understand the environment in where Health Promotion Schools will develop their activities. For example, "local health professionals are more likely to achieve success in addressing the social determinants of health as they bring public health administration, community leaders, funding organizations, and other stakeholders to the table and demonstrate to them the opportunities to reduce health disparities and improve health across all sectors of society by focusing on social determinants" (Hunter, Neiger, and West, 2011, p. 527).

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