

CompHP

THE COMPHP PROJECT - DEVELOPING COMPETENCIES AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR HEALTH PROMOTION CAPACITY BUILDING IN EUROPE (COMPHP)

PROJECT RATIONALE

Competency models have been increasingly used since the 1980's to clarify the specific requirements for public health, health education and health promotion practice. A number of countries have made significant progress in delineating competencies for health promotion, notably Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and the United States of America (USA) (mainly focusing on health education), together with a small number of countries in Europe including the United Kingdom (UK), the Netherlands and Estonia (1-3). Accreditation systems have been developed in the USA, the UK, Estonia and the Netherlands (2, 4). The Galway Consensus Conference Statement on domains of core competencies in health promotion (5) also provides a useful international perspective for the work of the project.

Exploration of competencies has been undertaken in other EU funded projects such as the European Masters in Health Promotion (EUMAHP) (6) and the Public Health Education in the Context of an Enlarging Europe Project (PHETICE) (7). The Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER) (8) is also developing standards for public health practice which incorporate a health promotion competency sub-set. More specifically, a scoping study on levels of development of health promotion practice and training across the International Union for Health Promotion and Education /European Region (IUHPE/EURO) (3) and a pilot feasibility study on implementing a pan-European accreditation system (9), informed the development of the project. The pilot feasibility study identified a high level of interest in the development of accreditation systems but also a lack of resources to take this forward. Other key findings of the study included the differences in health systems and health promotion structures across Europe which will impact on the work of the project and the potential usefulness of a validated pan-European system, operated by a reputable body such as the IUHPE, as lever for accessing support and resources for accreditation at national level. Other issues identified as drivers for the development of competency-based standards included: freedom of employment policies highlighting the need for agreed standards to facilitate employment across the EU; quality assurance issues for practice, education and training identified within all health fields and the clarity on workforce capacity required for promoting health as identified in European Union (EU) strategies which can be best addressed through agreed competency-based standards.

There was, therefore, a strong rationale for developing agreed competency-based standards and a coherent accreditation framework that will build on related national, regional and international developments and lead to a comprehensive and flexible system for workforce development and quality assurance in health promotion across Europe.

References

1. Battel-Kirk, B., Barry, M. M., Taub, A. *et al.* (2009) **A review of the international literature on health promotion competencies: identifying frameworks and core competencies**, *Global Health Promotion* Vol. 16 (2) 12. - <http://ped.sagepub.com/content/vol16/issue2/>
2. Santa-María Morales, A., Battel-Kirk, B., Barry, M. M. *et al.* (2009) **Perspectives on health promotion competencies and accreditation in Europe**. *Global Health Promotion* Vol. 16 (2) 21. - <http://ped.sagepub.com/content/vol16/issue2/>
3. Santa-María Morales, A. and Barry M. M. (2007) **Scoping Study on Training, Accreditation and Professional Standards in Health Promotion**. *IUHPE Research Report Series* Vol. 4 No 1 http://www.iuhpe.org/uploaded/Publications/Books_Reports/RRS/RRS_1_07.pdf
4. Speller, V., Smith, B. J. and Lysoby L. (2009) **Development and utilization of professional standards in health education and promotion: US and UK experiences**. *Global Health Promotion* Vol. 16 (2) 32. - <http://ped.sagepub.com/content/vol16/issue2/>
5. Allegrante, J.P., Barry M. M., Airhihenbuwa C. O. *et al.* (2009) **Toward Domains of Core Competency for Building Global Capacity in Health Promotion: The Galway Consensus Conference Statement**. http://www.iuhpe.org/uploaded/Activities/Cap_building/Galway_Consensus_Statement.pdf
6. EUMAHP: <http://www.sgw.hs-magdeburg.de/eumahp/>
7. PHETICE: <http://www.phetice.org/index.html>
8. ASPHER: <http://www.aspher.org/>
9. Battel-Kirk, B and Barry, M. M. (2009) **Testing the feasibility of a pan European framework for health promotion accreditation - IUHPE Research Report Series Volume 4 No 1** http://www.iuhpe.org/uploaded/Publications/Books_Reports/RRS/RSS_1_09.pdf

The project (# 20081209) is funded by the [European Agency for Health and Consumers \(EAHC\)](#).

