



Advancing Health Promotion in Schools: Evidence and Practice in Nepal

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BACKGROUND

The Opportunity

Health and education are deeply interdependent. Schools provide a unique and powerful opportunity to improve both the health and educational outcomes of school-age children.

Key Challenges

1. High burden of childhood diseases and risk factors.
2. Non-communicable diseases, nutrition issues, traffic injuries
3. Violence, drowning and mental health problems
4. Teenage pregnancy impacting health and educational goals

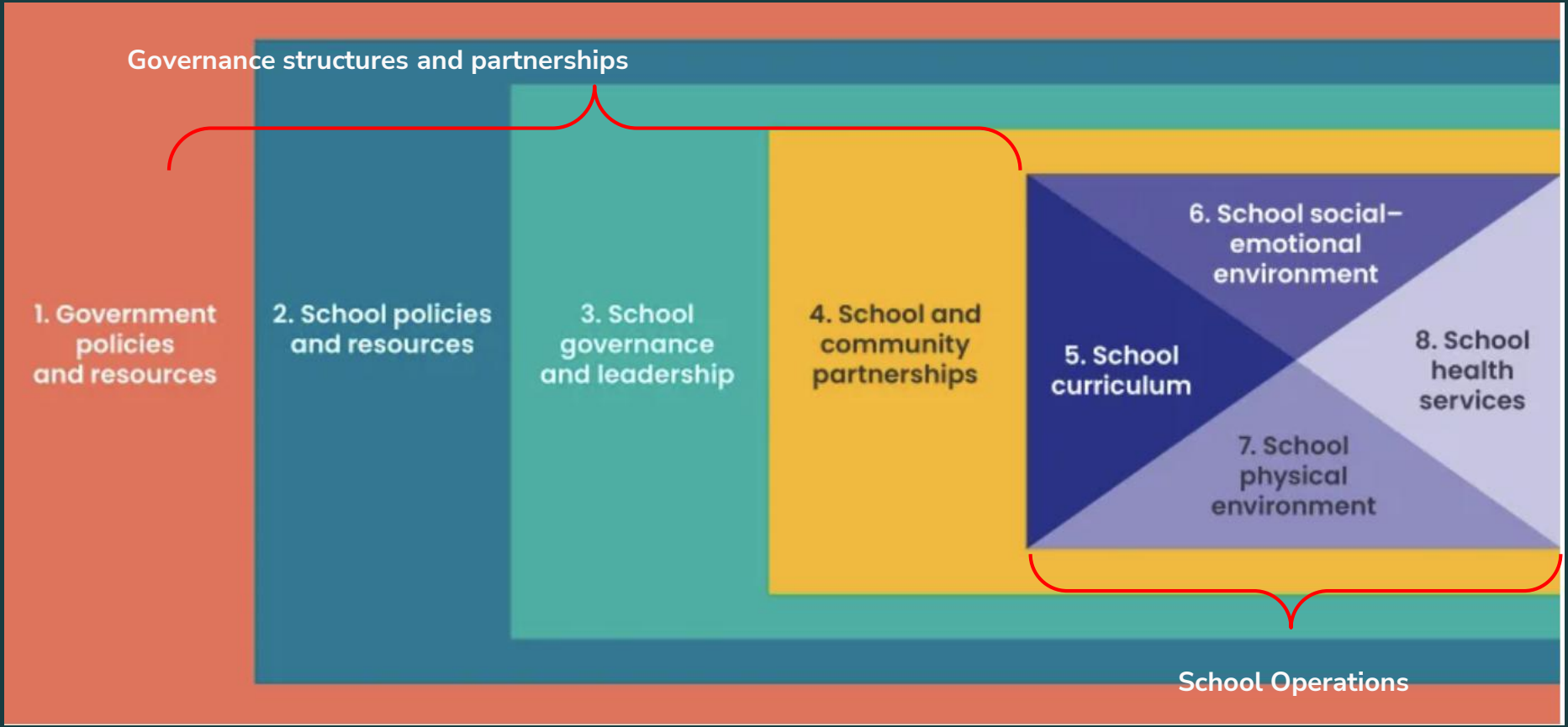
HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOLS (HPS)

- WHO concept (1995)
 - Whole-school approach
 - Engages school, family, community

“A health promoting school can be characterized as a school, which is constantly strengthening its capacity as a healthy place in which to live, learn and work.”



EIGHT GLOBAL STANDARDS FOR HPS



EVIDENCE



Risk Behaviors
(Smoking, poor diet reduced)



Mental Health
(Improved student wellbeing)



Physical Activity
(Greater student participation)

Global Research Findings

Studies across Europe, and Africa consistently show that Health Promoting School programs reduce risk behaviors such as smoking and poor diet, improve mental health outcomes, and increase students participation in physical activity demonstrating a clear link between school health environments and learning outcomes.

STUDY FINDINGS

- Research on Health Promoting Schools confirms that secondary school health education shapes students' attitudes toward personal and community health, builds practical life skills, and fosters pro-health behaviours.
- **WHO & International Studies:** School nurses are recognized as key agents in implementing the HPS framework, ensuring that health promotion is embedded in daily school life.
- **Evidence:** Nurse-led interventions improve student attendance, reduce absenteeism due to illness, and enhance academic performance by addressing health barriers to learning.

RESULTS

Gender & Age: Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73.8%) were male, predominantly within the **36–50 age group**

HPS Awareness: Despite most respondents having **no prior awareness** of the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) framework, health promotion initiatives still demonstrated a strong effectiveness rate of **63.8%**

School Type Comparison: Public schools outperform private schools in adopting health promotion practices, with **61.1% of public schools** demonstrating better compliance with recommended health promotion standards

Conclusions

Private schools: Good indicators in health policies, physical environment, and social environment.

Public schools: Better practice in community relationships and school health services.

IMPORTANCE OF HPS

Improves Health Literacy

Builds students' knowledge about health and wellness

Better Learning Results

Healthier students achieve better academic outcomes

Coordinated Approach

Addresses social, physical, and environmental needs together

Reduces Risky Behavior

Decreases smoking, poor diet, and harmful habits

Promotes Staff Health

A healthy school benefits all — students and teachers

Increased Self-Esteem

Children develop confidence and positive self-image

Reduced Bullying

Lowered incidence of bullying and violence in schools

CURRENT STATUS IN NEPAL

Federal Policy Framework

School health programs are being implemented through the School Health and Nursing Service Program Guideline, 2081 (2024), from the federal level. This guideline establishes the national framework for school health programming across all seven provinces.

Program Objective & Outcome

Certifying and developing schools as Health Promoting School (HPS) models is a core objective and expected outcome of this national program. The standard checklist based on WHO Global Standards is used as the basis for HPS certification.

SCHOOL NURSES — PROVINCIAL DISTRIBUTION

Province	NSSD Supported	Province Supported	Total
Koshi	22	174	196
Madhesh	38	80	118
Bagmati	0	848	848
Gandaki	35	18	53
Lumbini	36	0	36
Karnali	98	0	98
Sudurpashchim	32	26	58
National Total	261	1,146	1,407

PRACTICE

Certification Standard

A standard checklist has been developed for the certification of Health Promoting Schools, based on the WHO Global Standards for HPS.

Based on WHO Global Standards for HPS, this certification framework ensures quality and consistency across all participating schools.

Implementation

All schools with assigned school health nurses are actively implementing the Health Promoting School program through their school health nurses.

All 1,407 deployed school nurses across Nepal's 7 provinces are active HPS implementers.

HEALTH PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

1. School Health & Nutrition Program

- Mid-day meals
- Deworming
- Iron folic acid distribution
- WASH initiatives
- School health services

2. Routine & Campaign Vaccinations

Regular immunization drives and national campaign vaccinations delivered through school channels.

3. Health Screening

Systematic health screening programs for early detection of health issues among students.

HEALTH PROMOTION ACTIVITIES (CONT.)

4

Free Sanitary Pad Distribution

Supporting menstrual health and hygiene for girl students

5

Harit Vidyalaya (Green School)

Environmental sustainability concept integrated in schools

6

Comprehensive Sexuality Education

CSE integrated into school curriculum

7

Adolescent-Friendly Info Corner

Dedicated information corners established at schools

8

Formation of Bal Club

Child clubs to promote student participation and leadership

9

Health Ambassador Program

Student health ambassadors to champion healthy behaviors

1

Menstrual Hygiene Management

0

Comprehensive MHM programs across schools

CHALLENGES

Resource Constraints

Many schools lack funding for infrastructure and health services.

Policy Gaps

Weak national frameworks lead to fragmented implementation.

Equity Issues

Rural and public schools often lag behind urban/private institutions.

Sustainability

Programs risk fading without long-term government and community support

ROLE OF SCHOOL NURSES

1

Health Screening

Eye, oral, dental, and BMI assessments

2

Health Education

Delivering health literacy to students and staff

3

Referral & Follow-Up

Connecting students with appropriate health services

4

Counseling

Providing mental and psychosocial support

5

Guardian Engagement

Involving parents in student health outcomes

6

School Staff Engagement

Engaging staff and committee members in HPS

7

Healthy Environment

Maintaining a safe and healthy school environment

CONCLUSION

Key Takeaways

01

Schools are irreplaceable platforms for promoting child and adolescent health.

02

The HPS framework provides a proven, evidence-based model for whole-school health improvement.

03

Nepal has made significant strides through federal policy and nurse deployment.

04

Scaling and strengthening the HPS model is essential for meeting national health and education goals.

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धन्यवाद.

Thank you