RESULTS

The Kenya National School Health Policy was found to complement existing education and health policies.
The Kenya National School Guidelines include some relevant thematic areas, including values and life skills, gender issues, health education, water, sanitation, hygiene, nutrition, disease prevention and control.

Participatory Development of National School Health Policies: Some Lessons Learned from Kenya

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BACKGROUND

Kenya has recently made significant progress towards improving the health and education standards of schoolchildren by launching the National School Health Policy and Guidelines, a participatory endeavor between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation and their partners.

The Policy and Guidelines were officially launched in August 2009 and now provide an enabling environment for adequate school health and nutrition.

OBJECTIVES

This research is intended to facilitate sharing of school health improvement strategies and policy statements across African countries by documenting lessons learned from Kenya.

The research also provides recommendations for future action.

The Kenya National School Health Policy and Guidelines were launched jointly by the Minister of Public Health and Sanitation (Beth Mugiga) and the Minister of Education (Prof. Sam Ongeri) in Nairobi on 5th August 2009

METHODS

The research is based on a comparison of the Kenya National School Health Policy and Guidelines with globally accepted key school health policies and guidelines, such as those provided in the Global School Health Policy Checklist. The comparison is done through document review and semi-structured interviews with key informants.

Global School Health Policy Checklist developed by the Partnership for Child Development (PfCD)

Knowledge & Behaviour promotion

- HIV/AIDS: Is HIV/AIDS taught in schools in any form (e.g. knowledge-based, life skills, peer education, etc.)?
- Life skills for health generally – Does the education sector use life skills approach for health education?
- Specifically alcohol – Does the health education specifically target tobacco use?
- Specifically substance abuse (including alcohol) – Does the health education specifically target substance abuse (e.g. alcohol, drugs)?
- Hygiene education – Hand washing = hygiene education (e.g. hand washing) taught in the school curriculum?
- Reproductive health – (including pregnancy, STIs) – Does the health education include information about reproductive health (e.g. pregnancy, STIs)?
- Nutrition education – Does the health education specifically include nutrition education?
- Obesity – Does the health education specifically target obesity?

Services

- Malaria – Is malaria a specific target of the school health program (e.g. providing insecticide treated bed nets)?
- Iron supplementation – Do the schools have an iron supplementation program (e.g. providing iron tablets)?
- Deworming – Do the schools have a deworming program (e.g. providing deworming tablets)?
- Screening and referrals generally by teachers – Are screening (for simple ailments such as refractive error, absence of vision, hearing impairment, skin/eye/ear infections) and referrals conducted on a regular basis in the schools by the teachers?
- Screening and referrals generally by Ministry of Health – Are screening and referrals conducted on a regular basis in the schools by Ministry of Health staff?

Lessons Learned from Kenya

The Kenya National School Health Policy and Guidelines were launched in 2009, and the research is based on a comparison with globally accepted key school health policies and guidelines, such as those provided in the Global School Health Policy Checklist. The comparison is done through document review and semi-structured interviews with key informants.

Kenya National School Health Policy and Guidelines: children rights

Some thematic areas in the Kenya National School Health Policy and Guidelines

Kenya National School Health Policy and Guidelines: children rights

(Source: GTZ)

The Kenya National School Health Policy and Guidelines are based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Kenya Children’s Act 2001. These are survival rights, protective rights, participation rights and protection rights. Both documents intend to strengthen children’s capacity to fullfil their right to health, and education for the former and equal opportunities for the latter.

- improving access to children’s health-related information;
- creating awareness among teachers, parents, and the community at large of different rights; and promoting strategies to protect children against violence towards children;
- enhancing access to complaint mechanisms for any of the above cases as well as to rehabilitative/counseling measures;
- developing curricula which protect children from abuses;
- facilitating children’s active participation in decisions regarding their health and education.

Furthermore, the documents respect the interrelatedness of human rights by linking the right to the other human rights, such as the right to water, sanitation, information, food/nutrition, privacy, and education.

CONCLUSIONS

The Kenya National School Health Policy and Guidelines define a comprehensive school health programming that enables the government and its partners to provide quality health education and services to promote overall health, nutrition and education of children.

Having been developed in a participatory manner, the Policy and Guidelines have received wide support and goodwill so far.

These now needs to be supplemented by effective management, adequate resources, training and technical assistance through an action plan that outlines short- and mid-term objectives, tasks, timetables, and responsibilities.

The Kenya National School Health Policy and Guidelines were launched jointly by the Minister of Public Health and Sanitation (Beth Mugiga) and the Minister of Education (Prof. Sam Ongeri) in Nairobi on 5th August 2009

The comparison is done through document review and semi-structured interviews with key informants.

The research is based on a comparison of the Kenya National School Health Policy and Guidelines with globally accepted key school health policies and guidelines, such as those provided in the Global School Health Policy Checklist. The comparison is done through document review and semi-structured interviews with key informants.