

INTRODUCTION

The staff at the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University in Brno have been concerned with health education for almost twenty years now, during which time it has gradually become a separate discipline, though continuing to draw on their many years of experience, with lecturers in various fields at the Faculty of Education incorporating ideas about health, prevention, health promotion, quality of life and so on into their teaching. Without attempting to enumerate all the individual fields concerned, we should give a mention here to pedagogy, psychology, special pedagogy, social pedagogy and physical education, for which the new conception of health “as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, rather than merely the absence of disease or defect”, as health is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO), has been an inspiration. All disciplines that play a part in the education of mankind have found their application here, with their importance being further underlined by additional materials such as HEALTH 21 (WHO) and the pertinent passages of the General Educational Programmes that have given a new direction to the Czech educational system.

The Faculty of Education at Masaryk University contributes to these endeavours with various projects, pieces of research and studies. The research project SCHOOLS AND HEALTH FOR THE 21ST CENTURY (*MSM0021622421*), implemented in the period 2005 to 2011, is a relatively large project of this kind. With the issuing of this publication, we now find ourselves in the final phase of work on this project, and the anthology is taking its place as the latest of a series of publications that we have already issued as part of the given research project.

The basic project team working on this piece of research is comprised of staff from Masaryk University, and the Faculty of Education in particular, though over the number of years of work on the project the topic of our investigation has attracted a number of external collaborators from both this country and abroad. We are delighted that our work has received a positive response abroad, and that our foreign colleagues are taking part in our activities and likewise inviting us to work with them.

Although foreign experts publish in practically every anthology we issue, we have devoted this publication to them to a much greater extent in order to show how issues associated with health education are studied abroad. We have also included papers by a number of Czech authors in the anthology, ensuring that the publication offers an interesting comparison of specialist work in the area of health education in the international context.

The publication as a whole is, as usual, of a working nature. The authors are completely responsible for their own texts, and contact details for all the authors are given at the end of the publication. Their studies offer diverse material in terms of

both content and form, and the editor of the anthology hopes that the book *Schools and Health – Health Education – Experience in This Country and Abroad* will prove inspiring and interesting, and encourage discussion.

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SCHOOLS AND HEALTH FOR THE 21ST CENTURY