

INTRODUCTION

The research project SCHOOL AND HEALTH FOR THE 21ST CENTURY at the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University has been considering the meeting point between education and health with the aim of making health education more effective for six years now. Contemporary trends around the world focus on increasing the standard of the health of the population. This can be seen from materials from the World Health Organisation and from national projects in all the countries that are trying to prepare a new European health policy. The aim of this policy should be to understand and explain the importance of health to the economic and social development of a rapidly changing Europe and to find and take advantage of suitable methods for improving people's health. The ideas contained in important materials in the Czech educational system, such as its *Framework Educational Programmes*, should correspond to these principles.

These ideas are the point of departure for research focusing on health education and increasing health literacy, which we and J. Holčík, author of one of the contributions to this publication, understand as "the ability to choose health in everyday life".

The majority of the studies in this anthology featured on the programme of the international conference SCHOOL AND HEALTH FOR THE 21ST CENTURY, which is held every year at the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University, where papers are presented by members of the basic research team for this project, a number of other specialists who express their thoughts about our programme, and other people with an interest in the focus of the conference.

The nature of the contributions to this publication corresponds to this. It contains articles the authors consider useful to the study of the given issues in view of their qualifications, focus and experience. We did not wish to edit their texts, as these are the work of graduate experts presenting their views, methodology and conclusions who are completely open to discussion, and the list of the addresses of the authors given at the end of the publication may contribute towards this. This anthology is primarily of a working nature and does not, as a whole, aspire to the codification of a particular conception, but shows rather how different are the starting points from which health education may be approached.

A great advantage, and perhaps the principal contribution of the conference, is the chance of live discussions. Anthologies of articles, although resulting from particular conferences, often lack this quality. We will be delighted if the content of this publication produces comments, agreement and disagreement, and approaches the contemporary polemic, which is always necessary in the area of health education, and particularly in the contemporary educational system in this country.

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