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| **Title of Symposium** Towards effective health literacy policies |
| **General Objective**  Health literacy has been a prominent issue on the agenda of the World Health Organization (WHO) for almost two decades. WHO recently established a strong global mandate for public policy action on health literacy by positioning it as one of three key pillars for achieving sustainable development and health equity in the Shanghai Declaration on Health Promotion. Several countries have national health literacy policies, with many others expected to develop them in the immediate future. It is, therefore, timely to examine current policy approaches to health literacy, and explore how more, and more effective, health literacy policies may be developed to promote health and equity .  The objectives of this symposium are to   * outline current knowledge of health literacy policies including evidence of impact on health literacy * highlight international documents supporting the development of health literacy policies * demonstrate tools for developing holistic health literacy policies that focus on building health literacy across a range of domains including education and the lived environment, and assessing health literacy policies. * develop a platform for sharing skills and knowledge to work with policy-makers to develop and improve health literacy policies.   **Proposed format of the session**  Initial presentations will be followed by a group discussion and plans for ongoing mutual support and collaboration.  **Conference theme and/or subthemes addressed**   * Ensure health equity throughout the life course, within and among countries, making each member of the global society an empowered lifelong learner * Make all urban and other habitats inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable and conducive to health and wellbeing * Build effective, accountable and inclusive governance at all levels that promotes, peace, justice and respect of human rights |

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| Title of Presentation 1 Progress in Implementing National Policies and Strategies for Health Literacy–What Have We Learned so Far? |
| **General Objective**  To present a study that analyzed a selection of existing policy documents for their strengths, limitations and themes, and offer observations about their potential to improve health literacy and health outcomes.  **Proposed format of the session**  Presentation outlining the lessons that can be learnt from early adopters of health literacy policy that will have usefulness for future policy development and implementation. We selected six policies for review; Australia, Austria, China, New Zealand, Scotland, and the United States. We used a set of criteria to guide a systematic analysis of policy documents for their context, intended target audiences, objectives, proposed actions and interventions, evidence of financial investment and intentions to monitor outcomes. We observed a number of common features that provide helpful signposting for future policy development in other countries. All represent a response to perceived deficiencies in the quality of patient communication and patient engagement. Most present health literacy as a universal challenge, with some also identifying groups who are of higher priority. They all recognize the importance of professional education in improving the quality of communication, and most recognize that the health literacy responsiveness of the health system needs to be improved. However, there was significant variability in linking resources to specific strategies and actions, as well as in the systems for monitoring progress and accountability for progress. This variability reflects important contextual differences between countries and health systems. However, this lack of specificity will likely have an impact on the priority given to improving health literacy and on the long-term sustainability of defined actions to improve health literacy in populations.  **Conference theme and/or subthemes addressed**  Build effective, accountable and inclusive governance at all levels that promotes, peace, justice and respect of human rights |

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| **Title of Presentation 2** The WHO Shanghai statement and health literacy policy |
| **General Objective**  To provide an overview of the background to and key elements of the Shanghai Declaration on Promoting Health in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that relate to people’s empowerment by promoting health literacy  **Proposed format of the session**  Short presentation providing historical and contextual information on the prioritisation of health literacy by WHO, as reflected in their major health promotion policy statements. Strengthening personal and community skills in ways that enable and empower people to be confident, informed and engaged in decisions that influence the determinants of health has been a cornerstone of modern health promotion since the publication of WHO’s Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion in 1986. This goal of strengthening personal skills has continuously evolved and been consistently included in WHO statements on health promotion for the past 30 years. The concept of health literacy has emerged as naturally complementary to this original commitment, first referred to in the 2005 WHO Bangkok Charter, and forming a core strategy of the most recent 2016 Shanghai Declaration. This Declaration recognizes “health literacy as a critical determinant of health”; that health literacy “empowers individual citizens and enables their engagement in collective health promotion action”; and states that “health literacy is founded on inclusive and equitable access to quality education and life-long learning. It must be an integral part of the skills and competencies developed over a lifetime.” The Declaration commits WHO to “develop, implement and monitor intersectoral national and local strategies for strengthening health literacy in all populations and in all educational settings”.  **Conference theme and/or subthemes addressed**   * Ensure health equity throughout the life course, within and among countries, making each member of the global society an empowered lifelong learner * Build effective, accountable and inclusive governance at all levels that promotes, peace, justice and respect of human rights |

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| **Title of Presentation 3** When Position is Policy - IUHPE Position Statement on Health Literacy |
| **General Objective**  To present the recently ratified IUHPE Position Statement on Health Literacy as a basis for promoting global policy to support and advance health promotion action for improving health literacy in populations, and to achieve a wide range of health and social outcomes.  **Proposed format of the session**  The IUHPE Position Statement on Health Literacy will be briefly presented. The Statement was developed through a highly participative approach over the course of four years, including extensive in-person and on-line consultations across the global membership of IUHPE, thus capturing diverse perspectives, and collecting feedback from IUHPE members, other health promotion colleagues and stakeholders.  The Statement calls for global action, advocating for investment, and emphasizing:   * Health literacy and health promotion policy, promoting a systems approach to health literacy * Ensuring the inclusion of health literacy in global, national and regional policies, and strategies for health promotion and social determinants of health. * Recognizing that health literacy is content and context specific across the lifespan * Health literacy is modifiable and responds to appropriate intervention * Emphasizing that health literacy intervention is a people/community-based process for empowerment * Funding, producing and promoting research to contribute to the growing evidence base. * Building capacity and sharing knowledge, applying an inter-sectorial approach * Identifying and engaging relevant stakeholders for collaborative health literacy action, research and policy.   The overall purpose of the Statement will be discussed as it provides a solid base for advocacy for health literacy both within the health promotion community, and also among stakeholders and partners in health promotion.  **Conference theme and/or subthemes addressed**   * Ensure health equity throughout the life course, within and among countries, making each member of the global society an empowered lifelong learner * Make all urban and other habitats inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable and conducive to health and wellbeing * Design and implement effective and fair climate change adaptation strategies * Build effective, accountable and inclusive governance at all levels that promotes, peace, justice and respect of human rights |

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| **Title of Presentation 4** Health literacy for politicians – building the policy case on health literacy |
| **General Objective**  Building the policy case for health literacy must be a national priority in countries around the world. The presentation clarifies with concrete evidence and recommendations how politicians and decision-makers can build the policy case at local level and become active advocates for health literacy in their country and community.  **Proposed format of the session**  A brief presentation will provide the overview of current arguments used to build the policy case on health literacy followed by recommendations. As society changes, the health systems are evolving. There is a shift from a paternalistic model to a rights-based model where people are provided with information and choices about their health. Furthermore, the sustainable development agenda requires global action regarding people, planet and prosperity with regards to goal 3. Finally, the economic incitement is eminent as the growing rate of spending on health has been well documented. High health care costs are magnified for people with poor health literacy. Leaning on common practice of developing national cancer programmes, the lessons learned are transferred to the health literacy field and recommendations are listed on how to proceed with health literacy strategy development at country and community level in various settings.  **Conference theme and/or subthemes addressed**   * Ensure health equity throughout the life course, within and among countries, making each member of the global society an empowered lifelong learner * Make all urban and other habitats inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable and conducive to health and wellbeing * Build effective, accountable and inclusive governance at all levels that promotes, peace, justice and respect of human rights |

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| **Title of Presentation 5** What is the evidence on existing policies and linked activities and their effectiveness for improving health literacy at national, regional and organizational levels in the WHO European Region? |
| **General Objective**  Health literacy, with its focus on building skills in individuals and communities to promote health and health equity. The objective of this session in the symposium is to describe how evidence on how health literacy policies in the WHO European Region were identified, and their antecedents, actors, activities and outcomes were synthesised and reported.. This will be followed by a discussion about how understanding different policy approaches to health literacy, together with sharing of good practice, can promote   * Health equity throughout the life course, within and among countries, * The development of transferable skills through the life-course * Health promoting communities and cities * Promote effective, accountable and inclusive governance at all levels   **Proposed format of the session**  An initial brief presentation will be followed by small groups exploring how those developing and delivering policy can share knowledge and skills to promote each of the four areas outlined above. A plenary discussion will then share key points from the groups, The session will conclude with plans to continue the work started in the session through the IUHOE Global Working Group on Health Literacy.  **Conference theme and/or subthemes addressed**   * Ensure health equity throughout the life course, within and among countries, making each member of the global society an empowered lifelong learner * Make all urban and other habitats inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable and conducive to health and wellbeing * Build effective, accountable and inclusive governance at all levels that promotes, peace, justice and respect of human rights |