The Ministry of Health's policy statement is comprehensive and paves the way for health and non-health measures to address the social determinants of health. At the national level, several actions have taken place to build an institutional framework through the development of several intersectoral national strategies and capacity-building. In addition, decentralization of the health system has played a pivotal role in addressing the social determinants of health and provides the main forum for community-based initiatives. A large voluntary network serves as a link between the primary health care unit and the community.

## National strategies

Oman's national health strategies include:

- Health promotion strategy
- School health strategy, 2008–2015
- National community-based initiatives strategy, 2007
- Adolescent information, education and communication plan of action, 2007.

## Building capacity for health promotion

Through WHO support two teams and a total of 11 health and non-health staff have participated in the WHO Leadership Project for Health Promotion. Key outputs for this nine-month 3-module training curriculum include a draft national health promotion strategy, a legislative review on health promotion as well as advocacy for a Health Promotion Foundation, Oman.

Two national courses have been developed through WHO assistance, the Short course on health promotion (3 days) and the Management training course in community-based initiatives.

WHO Leadership Project for Health Promotion

## Community-based initiatives

In 1994, the Ministry of Health initiated the first community-based initiative supported in Wadi Ma'awel which focused on environmental health. The most well-known project, however, is the Nizwa Healthy Lifestyle Project which started in 1996 followed by the Sur Healthy City Project

and Qalhat Healthy Village Project in 2002. A central CBI unit was established in 2006 to consolidate the work of the CBI programme in the country, including the development of a CBI national strategy and advocacy material. Since then the number of Healthy City and Healthy Villages projects has increased and currently stands at 13 sites throughout the country.

Nizwa Healthy Lifestyle Project

## Community support group initiative

The Community Support Group Initiative is a network of more than 4000 men and women volunteers throughout the country and functions as the main link between primary health care centres and the community. It was established in 1992 to support the baby-friendly hospital initiative. Since then, the roles of the volunteers have expanded to not only raise awareness about maternal and child health issues but also noncommunicable diseases and healthy lifestyles. Based on a national review conducted in 2005, the Ministry of Heath developed a new vision for the community initiative with on focus on healthy lifestyles (healthy diet, physical activity and tobacco control), reproductive health and safety promotion.

## School health

The health-promoting school initiatives is a good example of close intersectoral collaboration and community mobilization. The Ministry of Health has made efforts to promote health in schools through the availability of school health services since 1991; interventions have been based on numerous studies conducted in schools. The health-promoting schools initiative was launched in 2004 with 19 schools selected to implement this programme. To be a health promoting school, school teams are trained on the concept, objectives and the eight components of the health-promoting schools (health education, health services, healthy environment, school nutrition, physical education, mental health and promotion of health of school staff and community involvement). Over 200 government schools are currently a part of the health-promoting schools network. Due to the success of this initiative, the Ministry of Health is initiating a Health Promoting College Network. Several documents are available regarding this initiative.

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