

6 April 2023 – Under the Patronage of His Excellency Lieutenant-General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, President of the Supreme Council of Health, in the presence of Her Excellency Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health in Bahrain, and Her Excellency Dr Shaikha Rana bint Isa bin Duajj Al-Khalifa, Secretary-General of the Higher Education Council (HEC), Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, designated 5 universities in Bahrain as WHO health-promoting universities.

On receiving the award, Her Excellency Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health in Bahrain stated, “I congratulate the health-promoting universities on this accomplishment. This comes as a culmination of the Ministry of Health’s efforts and endeavours to continue implementing joint health and development projects and programmes in partnership with the WHO Country Office in Bahrain”.

The WHO health-promoting universities programme stems from the healthy city programme, encompassing social determinants of health in a community-based approach to physical, mental and social health in an academic settings. In Bahrain, implementation of healthy settings infrastructures has proven to provide platforms for health promotion, advocacy and implementation across different sectors.

"By developing the WHO healthy universities programme, the leadership in Bahrain continues to show commitment, not only in adding value across national settings, but in advancing sustainable development across regional and global environments as well. Guided by the future-ready mindset of their students, academic institutions continuously seek innovative ways to empower multisectoral action; encouraging community engagement, partnerships, and the participation of all stakeholders to improve the social determinants of health through shared action. Together, we hold the potential to influence sustainable opportunities to advance Health For All By All", said Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

Following assessments that saw a WHO delegation conducting field visits to each university, criteria was evaluated based on global standards, to ensure eligibility for health- promoting university status. As such, the pioneering healthy universities in Bahrain are Ahlia University, Arabian Gulf University, Kingdom University, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland - Medical University of Bahrain, and the University of Technology Bahrain.

“Higher education has long played a catalyst in improving the health of populations, with contributions across academia, youth groups, teaching and research developing foundations of sustainable urban progress. Guided by Bahrain’s visionary leadership, the advancement of the WHO healthy universities programme brings us one step closer to realizing the WHO Triple Billion Goal 3: 1 billion people enjoying better health and well-being”, said Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain

The WHO healthy universities programme embodies a settings-based approach to health promotion, recognizing higher educational institutions as important contributors to sustainable development, through their role in adding value to protect and advance the health and well-being of students, staff and the wider community. The pioneering programme in Bahrain acts as a foundation on which to build future development, joining global healthy universities networks, advancing health and well-being policies and practices, and increasingly access to health promotion across networks by developing multisectoral partnerships and outreach across regional communities.

Related link

[Health promoting universities: concept, experience and framework for action \(who.int\)](#)

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