

Poles at the declarative level rate health highly as a value, but at the same time, they are not able to properly care for it. Research results clearly show that health remains one of the most important values, and a healthy lifestyle is the most preferred by Poles. However, such positive declarations do not prevent adult Poles from spending a significant portion of their budget on cigarettes and other unhealthy practices. Research commissioned by the World Health Organization (WHO) has shown that this problem is not limited to Poles only - as many as half of Europeans experience various health problems. What is the reason for this? First of all, it might be explained by low health capital. We will understand this concept as a collection of knowledge on health-related topics, the ability to communicate information related to it, and orientation to the future, i.e., activity and awareness that current health behaviours are essential for achieving a high quality of life. Its lack in conjunction with low health awareness results in poorer health and more frequent hospitalizations. This problem has been noticed by the WHO. It has been for many years calling for the development of health competences and creating space for discussion. In particular, childhood and adolescence should be an intensive time for the development of health capital and the acquisition of health competences. Combined with the sufficiently developed ability to think critically, they should facilitate the best decisions leading to a healthy lifestyle.

The planned research concerns the development of health capital and health competences of primary school students. Research tasks assume the analysis of school programs and textbooks. We will ask questions about what pupils in primary schools in Poland are taught about health-related topics, and in what context the knowledge is presented, whether the textbooks encourage to care for health, or rather threaten with diseases. The next stage will include quantitative measurement of individual competences of pupils in order to verify to what extent the policies and schools efforts really work. We aim here to assess the level of health literacy and critical thinking among pupils grades 6th to 8th in a national survey. In order to diagnose pupils' skills with high-quality tools, we will adapt and validate a renowned international instrument measuring skills of critical thinking about health. The collected material will be confronted with the opinions and experiences of teachers, educators, school nurses/hygienists, and pupils. In the course of the research, both content and teaching methods will be identified and described. The research team will also visit schools to observe eating habits, to analyze products sold in school shops and vending machines, ways of spending free time during breaks.

The acronym of the "LIGHT" project is supposed to emphasize the essence of education in the process of building health capital and health literacy and critical thinking. It should also indicate the direction on the path to better health of society as a whole. The diagnosis, which will be the result of the research project, can become the basis for building educational programs developing health competences.