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## Third expert group meeting on cultural contexts of health and well-being

UNESCO

7 place de Fontenoy  
75007 Paris, France  
13-14 March 2017

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### Scope and purpose

#### Background

In January 2015, the WHO Regional Office for Europe convened its first expert group meeting on the cultural contexts of health (CCH), thereby initiating a project that seeks to build a platform for research from the health-related humanities and social sciences to support the implementation of Health 2020, the European policy framework for health and well-being. The second meeting of the expert group was convened in April 2016 to further explore how research from the humanities and social sciences can inform policy-making, and how a greater awareness of the importance of CCH can be promoted both within WHO and more broadly in the public health arena.

To date, the CCH project has articulated the following vision:

*to enhance public health policy-making through a nuanced understanding of how cultural contexts affect health and health care.*

Three objectives undergird this vision.

- To create a focus for culture and health at the Regional Office, in order to contribute to the implementation of the European policy framework Health 2020 and to strengthen the Regional Office's position on achieving the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets.
- To strengthen action-oriented humanities and social sciences research and policy analysis.
- To promote the validity and use of an interdisciplinary evidence base for health-related policy and practice.

Several important milestones have been achieved since the beginning of CCH. First, WHO has committed core funding to the project, thereby securing staffing positions and supporting the sustainability of the project. Second, grant funding has been successfully applied for from both the Wellcome Trust and the Robert Wood Johnson foundation, allowing for an accelerated programme of activities over the next three years. Third, a partnership has been established between WHO and UNESCO which will strengthen the project's technical work from the cultural perspective. Fourth Exeter University has been designated as a WHO Collaborating Centre on Culture and Health, adding further research capacity to the project. The necessary groundwork has therefore been laid to move the CCH project into an operational phase during which the project team will seek to

collaborate with various WHO technical programmes on the following four focus areas: the environment, nutrition, mental health, and migration.

### **Objectives**

The purpose of this third meeting of the CCH expert group, co-organized with UNESCO, will be two-fold. The first day will be dedicated to reviewing and inputting on the various pieces of technical work which are currently being developed by the CCH project team. On day two, the meeting will shift towards recommending new areas of work and development for 2017, with a particular focus on research methodologies and concrete research outputs.

On day one, the expert group meeting will have **four objectives**:

1. Review and input on the advocacy work of the WHO Secretariat
2. Discuss the draft CCH position paper and conceptual model
3. Review the draft toolkit on cultural competency
4. Advise on the expansion of the CCH/Global Health Histories seminar series

On day two, the meeting will focus on the following further **three objectives**:

1. Develop the terms of reference for two Health Evidence Network Reports in the CCH focus areas.
2. Discuss further humanities and social science methodologies that should be considered and promoted by CCH and discuss the transferability of UNESCO's work in this area.
3. Advise on the relevance of arts & health research to CCH.

The meeting will be held over two full days on 13-14 March at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris. The working language will be English.

### **Participants**

This is an invitation-only meeting for experts from the health related humanities and social sciences, as well as experts from public health, UNESCO, and other relevant international organizations, whose focus is on the intersection of culture, health and well-being.

### **Outputs**

Following the meeting, a summary report will be produced. This report will form the basis of a publication in the ongoing series of CCH meeting reports, which serve to promote the work of WHO in this area and the importance of culture in relation to public health. Furthermore, the meeting will produce an expanded action plan which will provide an evaluation of the progress with tasks currently outlined in the action plan and set out the core activities of the CCH project for 2017 which in turn will result in a number of other concrete outputs.