

# Health literacy development for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases

Volume 4

Case studies from WHO National Health  
Literacy Demonstration Projects





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Health literacy development for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases:  
Volume 4. Case studies from WHO National Health Literacy Demonstration Projects

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## Contents

Foreword by the WHO Director-General	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Abbreviations	viii
Key terms and concepts	ix
Guide to using this document	xii

## Volume 4

# Case studies from WHO National Health Literacy Demonstration Projects

4.1	Introduction	1
4.2	The Ophelia (Optimising Health Literacy and Access) process	3
4.3	Mali: Health literacy and people with diabetes in low-resource settings	7
4.4	Canada: Health literacy needs of people with COPD or heart failure	13
4.5	Canada: Health literacy – reducing inequities and improving outcomes for people using mental health services	18
4.6	Denmark: The Heart Skills Study – health literacy in people in cardiac disease rehabilitation	22
4.7	France, Réunion Island: eHealth Literacy Indian Ocean Health Innovation	28
4.8	Ireland: The Irish Heart Foundation Schools Health Literacy Project	34
4.9	The Netherlands: Health-literate rheumatology clinics	40

4.10	Norway: Health literacy – a key to health in people with COPD	46
4.11	Portugal: Health literacy for prevention and control of type 2 diabetes	52
4.12	Portugal: Health literacy, health promotion and social cohesion for the prevention of NCDs among migrant populations	57
4.13	Slovakia: Using health literacy profiles to improve chronic disease management	62
4.14	Egypt: Health literacy of fishermen and their families living near Lake Borollos	67
4.15	Australia: Improving breast screening awareness and participation among culturally diverse women	73
4.16	Australia: HealthLit4Kids – building health literacy from the schoolground up	79
4.17	Australia: Developing mental health literacy responsiveness education and training	85
4.18	Brunei Darussalam: Health literacy among people with type 2 diabetes	91
	References	95

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## Foreword by the WHO Director-General



The burden caused by the epidemic of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and mental health conditions and their modifiable risk factors on people, communities and economies is a major challenge to health, well-being and sustainable and equitable development. Governments need to address the urgency of investing in healthy populations and resilient health systems, with increased investments in prevention, screening, early diagnosis and appropriate treatment for NCDs. They must do so through inclusive, contextual and equity-driven strategies that are fit for local purposes and with a commitment to leaving no one behind.

A key enabler to accelerating progress towards the NCD targets in the Sustainable Development Goals is health literacy, to support people, communities and organizations to understand, recognize and take effective actions to protect and promote their own health.

This report provides practical recommendations for developing health literacy interventions to support countries to systematize the co-design of health literacy actions to enhance the impact of policies, programmes and services for the prevention and control of NCDs and mental health conditions, and their modifiable risk factors and determinants.

These recommendations draw from the findings of 16 case studies from low- to high-income countries, which have generated data supporting the development of locally owned and fit-for-purpose NCD strategies that are more likely to be embraced, implemented and sustained, especially among disadvantaged and poor communities.

The imperative is for rapid development and systematic implementation of country-relevant, context-specific solutions. The wide-scale implementation of the guidance contained in this report by World Health Organization (WHO) Member States will generate implementable and sustainable NCD health literacy development actions that respond to local contexts and demand. This will help to drive progress towards the WHO Triple Billion targets and improve health and well-being for current and future generations.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus'.

**Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**

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The report was developed under the leadership of Svetlana Akselrod (Director, Global Noncommunicable Diseases Platform), Ruediger Krech (Director, Health Promotion) and Bente Mikkelsen (Director, Noncommunicable Diseases).

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