Welcome to the tenth, jubilee issue of *Research Update*, the newsletter of the *Research Programme for Health and Environmental Education*. In this issue we feature selected research and publication activities of the Programme members for the period December 2010 – June 2011. The period is characterized by the same story as the previous one: the much spoken about, debated, contested, AU structural reform. This issue will, however, refrain from commenting on this process. Instead, we focus on another event closely linked to the Research Programme: retirement of professor Karsten Schnack.

Karsten is withdrawing after 37 years of productive work at the academia, participating in all the previous structures and re-structures linked to the DPU, soon to be renamed into the *Department of Education at the Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University*. During his career Karsten has worked in the areas of critical education theory, curriculum research and action competence related to environmental education, health education and education for sustainable development. Most importantly for the Research Programme, Karsten (together with ten research fellows from different disciplines) established the informal research group called *Research Centre for Health and Environmental Education* back in 1989. It is this Centre that was a predecessor of, and was transformed into the Research Programme for Health and Environmental Education in 2001, with Bjarne Bruun Jensen as the first official Programme leader.

Thus, 12 years before formalisation of the Research programmes at the DPU, our Programme was up and running as a cross-disciplinary research environment focusing on research of learning and teaching processes in relation the environment and health issues, critical competence development, and links between individual agency and social structures.

Nowadays, 22 years later, when seeing Karsten off to the well-deserved retirement, the Programme is well established, esteemed nationally and internationally; continuing the critical approach to educational research and introducing new perspectives, new dilemmas and opening new questions. We will continue to do so regardless of what the new AU structures will bring.

We dedicate this issue of *Research Update* to Karsten, as (one more) way to say THANKS for the inspiration and the many years of good scholarly work.

*Venka Simovska, Programme Director*
Update from ongoing projects

Competence development programme: Participation and Action Competence related to Physical Activity
The professional development programme - which is related to the project Go-active, aiming to promote physical activity of children in Vesterbro, with special focus on marginalised and inactive children – has been successfully finalised. The competence development programme focused on specific methods of the participatory health education approach and made use of problem-based learning; the participants conducted a specific project and documented their experience in a case story which will be published in a book. The book is currently being produced, in collaboration with UC Southern Denmark, (Knowledge Centre for Health Promotion). The Competence development programme is funded by DGI-byen, Copenhagen.
Jeanette M. Jensen

Development and Implementation of a National Policy for Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Schools in Europe (HEPS)
This, three year project funded by the European Commission (DG SANCO), is in its final phase. The project aimed to support the development and implementation of comprehensive, sustainable and evidence-based school programmes in the member states to combat and prevent overweight among school-aged children. The collaboration between 12 EU partner Universities, coordinated by the Netherlands Institute for Health Promotion (NIGZ), resulted in five publications comprising the HEPS School Kit - a resource helping EU member states develop national policy to promote healthy eating and physical activity in schools. The Research Programme had a lead role in producing the HEPS Tool for Schools, which has already being translated in Polish, German, Dutch and French and is widely used throughout EU. Moreover, the Research Programme was in charge of the Research on Implementation Workpackage. The findings will be published by the end of the summer.
Venka Simovska

Action Competence, Health Education and Teacher Training Colleges in Kenya
The fieldwork was finalised in January 2011. It covered a total of 16 months during 2009-2011. Apart from the international conference held in Nairobi, 8 December 2010, the project closed the fieldwork with a one-day research seminar “Health, Education and Learning in Kenya” in collaboration with Kenyatta University, Department of Educational Foundations at 12th January 2011. Subsequently, a number of feedback sessions were held in the three case study teacher training colleges at Nairobi, Thika and Machakos, respectively (Central and Eastern Province of Kenya). An approximate number of 220 tutors and 1.800 teacher students participated in the three sessions. For this, final stage in the project,
the work is focused on publishing the findings in a book and journal papers. The project is funded by Danida, Consultative Research Committee for Development Research for an expected period of 2 years (2009-2011).

Kari K. B. Dahl

**From Gardens to Guts (In Danish: ’Haver til Maver’)**

This evaluation project, which is funded by Tryg Foundation, aims to explore and evaluate an approach to involve children in cooking and nature exploration. A number of classes are involved in school gardens with outdoor kitchen facilities, to cook delicious food of the vegetables harvested in the gardens under guidance of local specialist staff. The activities run throughout the year and are combined with nature exploration at the same location of the attractive estate Krogerup Højskole in North Zealand. It is the intention that the main concept of this approach will be used as a base for similar initiatives in other parts of Denmark. The project started in August last year and is expected to finish by the end of 2011. The evaluation report is under preparation.

Karen Wistoft, Camilla R. Otte, and Søren Breiting

**Participation of Students in School Health Promotion: Systematic Review**

The project is being carried out in partnership with Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Health Promotion Research, Vienna, Austria. The main aim of the review is to systematically summarize the existing evidence for the impact of student participation in designing, planning and/or implementing school health promotion measures on the effectiveness of these measures. Another aim of the review is to summarize and analyse possible beneficial or hindering factors for student participation in designing, planning and/or implementing school health-promotion measures. If possible, it will be interesting to find out if there are differences in outcomes of school health promotion when students participate either only in implementation or in both designing/planning and implementing the measures. The four phases following the review protocol: screening (abstracts and full papers), selection, quality assessment and data extraction have been finalised. At the moment, we are in the phase of coding of the data. The full report is expected by the end of the year.

Venka Simovska

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**Recent selected publications**

This edited book of essays was published with an aim to honour Karsten’s work. In addition to many other colleagues, the following chapters are authored by members of the Research Programme:

- **Dahl, K. B.**: The even path? Action competence in the pedagogy for developing countries: challenges and perspectives (27-39)
- **Benn, J.**: From general curriculum theory to subject didactics – home economics as an example (51-59)
- **Læssøe, J.**: Participation and environmental education (59-73)
- **Kruse, S. and Wistoft, K.**: Didactics as a research field: an essay about communicative teaching theory (81-93)
- **Breiting, S.**: A shift of paradigm for environmental education – towards education for sustainable development (93-105)
- **Carlsson, M. and Hoffmann, B.**: Action competence and democratic formation (119-131)
- **Simovska, V.**: Learning through InterAction: A sociocultural perspective on action competence (141-155)

**Breiting, S.** (2011). We should strengthen children and youngsters’ competence to act (in Danish: Vi skal styrke børn og unges kompetence til at handle). pp. 14-22 in *Miljøsk. Journal* from NOAH.


Conference presentations

Kari K. B. Dahl

Debate meeting: Children, Participation and Health: between Politic and Pedagogy, Copenhagen, Denmark, Danish School of Education, AU, 1 February 2011. To launch the special issue of the Journal of the Department for Curriculum Research at The Danish School of Education featuring research papers by the members of the Research Programme, the Department organized a debate meeting, which was attended by about 100 people. The meeting was opened by Birgitte H. Sørensen, the Department leader. After that, all the authors presented their papers, followed by a lively discussion. Beth Elverdam, the guest editor of the special issue has an opening talk, and Jeanette M. Jensen facilitated the discussion. The following papers were presented:

- **Jette Benn**: Schools meals between pedagogy and politics
- **Lone Nordin**: Young people’s participation in health promotion: what does the literature say?
- **Monica Carlsson**: Do school meals aid learning?
- **Venka Simovska**: The Role of Health Education in Health Promotion

Søren Breiting

Venka Simovska

Jeppe Læsøe

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Invited talk: *How to provide students with competences needed to promote sustainable development in Denmark.* Conference on Denmark as a pioneer in innovation and sustainable development, The Danish Ministry of Education, 4. April 2011.

Venka Simovska

Jeppe Læssøe
Keynote: *Can Education Change the Climate? The Danish UN-RCE approach to implementing ESD.* NOVA University Network Annual Seminar 2011 on Education for Sustainable Development in a Nordic Life Science Perspective. Research Centre Foulum/Aarhus University, Denmark 5 – 6 May 2011.

Jeppe Læssøe

Katrine Dahl Madsen

Jonas Greve Lysgaard

Nanna Jordt Jørgensen
**New research projects and initiatives**

**Nordic Education for Sustainable Development and Health Education Research**

An application for funding of a research network was submitted to Nordic Research Council. The network is designed to stimulate high-quality research on ESD and Health Education in the wider Nordic context. Benefits of cooperation include access to a diversity of educational settings and the wide variety of expertise in ESD, EE and HE, but also to comparable settings and very specific expertise which may not be available in the individual countries alone. The aim of the network is to strengthen research training for PhD students and research collaboration in ESD, EE and HE in the Nordic countries. Furthermore the network aims to increase knowledge about and engagement in Nordic research in these areas by linking e-infrastructures and knowledge resources within the network and to international e-infrastructures. The network is coordinated by the Research Programme. Partners include: University of Uppsala (The Institute for Research on Education and Sustainable Development, Department of Education), Sweden, and University of Iceland (School of Education, Reykjavik) Island.

*Monica Carlsson*

**Evaluating the Model for the Development of the Health Education Curriculum on the Basis of the Educational Reform in Cyprus**

Application submitted to the Cypriot Foundation for Promotion of Research, within the Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Innovation. The project proposal is in partnership between the Research Programme and the Ministry of Education and Culture, Cyprus, Cyprus University of Technology, University of Nottingham, UK, and the Netherlands Institute for Health Promotion (NIGZ). The project aims to evaluate the Model for the development of the health education curriculum on the basis of the national educational reform in Cyprus. Amongst its general objectives is to reflect on Model’s impact on school community and develop a common evaluation framework that will enable the Ministry of Education and Culture to evaluate health promotion programs.

*Venka Simovska*

**Schools for Health and Educational Achievement**

A strategic partnership agreement has been signed with University College South Denmark, the Knowledge Centre for Health Promotion (KOSMOS). In the following three years, the partnership will utilize the synergies between the two institutions to strengthen research and educational development in health education and health promotion in pre-school, primary schools and youth education. Focus would be on combining research based evidence...
with practice based evidence, to examine what works, for whom and in which circumstances in health education and health promotion. With the links to the European Schools for Health Network (SHE), its Research Group and Health Education Research Network within the European Educational Research Association (EERA), which is coordinated by the Research Programme, the partnership with contribute to bringing Danish research and educational development in this area at the international forefront.

Venka Simovska

**Teacher Professional Development and Education for Sustainable Development**

The aim of this, one year project is to foster innovation and creativity in primary and lower secondary schools, through a focus on Education for Sustainable Development in teacher training. The methodological approach is participatory action research, in close collaboration with teachers. The project is partly funded by the Regional Centre of Expertise coordinated by the Research Programme.

Søren Breiting

**Students’ Solutions**

This, one year participatory action research project explores innovative approaches to engage students in waste issues and recycling in schools and community. The project is partly funded by the Regional Centre of Expertise coordinated by the Research Programme. It is expected to be finalised in August this year.

Søren Breiting
Other News

In the honour of Karsten Schnack, the Research Programme organized an international PhD course titled: *Action Competence in Health/Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development Revisited: theoretical, analytical and empirical perspectives*. The course took place at DPU 23-25 March. Course organizers and lecturers: Venka Simovska, Monica Carlsson, Søren Breiting and Karsten Schnack.

Helle M. Nordentoft and Birgitte R. Olesen (Roskilde University) won a price for a project on peer observation as a method to qualify interactions between staff, patients and relatives in psychiatric care with the title: Peer observation as innovative competence development in psycho education - from patient education to everyday communication with patients and their relatives. The price was instigated by Nordic Network for Adult Learning in cooperation with the Danish Peoples’ Information Council and NCK: National Centre for Competence development, DPU within the competitions entitled: From “best” practice to “innovative” practice.

Venka Simovska has been granted *Emerald Literati Network Award of Excellence for 2011, as an Outstanding Reviewer* for 2010. Each year Emerald names and rewards the Outstanding Reviewers who contribute to the success of academic Journals. Each journal’s Editor has nominated the Reviewer they believe has been that title’s most Outstanding Reviewer. The most Outstanding Reviewers are chosen following consultation amongst the journal’s Editors, whom are eminent academics or managers. Venka Simovska has been selected for the very impressive and significant contribution as a Reviewer to *Health Education* throughout 2010. Back in 2005, Venka Simovska has been granted the *Award for Excellence for an Outstanding Article*.