

# Developing Prevention Culture in SHE Practice

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## Introduction:

Prevention is the action of stopping something (incident) from happening or arising. In this instance, prevention can be interchanged with safety.

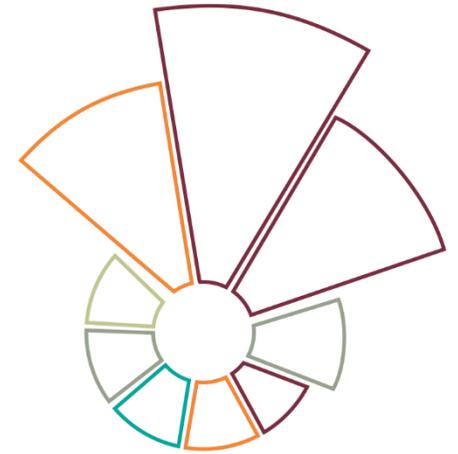
Culture is the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society, in other words, it is a way of life of a people.

Developing is growing and becoming more mature, advanced, or elaborate

Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) is an arm of an organization responsible for the observance and protection of occupational **health** and **safety** rules and regulations as well as the protection of the environment

Definition: Developing Prevention Culture in HSE Practice is the process or system of stopping incidents through an organized approach of growing and guiding the ideas, customs and social behaviour of a group of people in line with occupational health and safety requirements, and the protection of the environment.

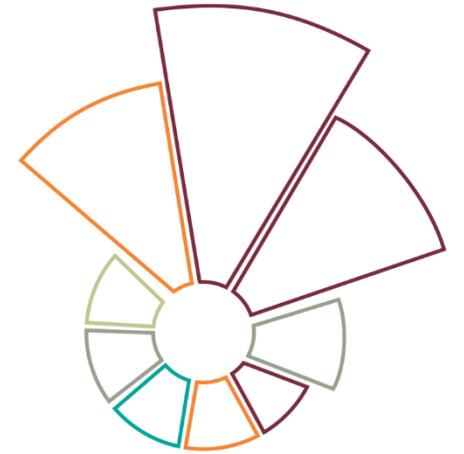
“The prevention/safety culture of an organization or society is the product of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competencies, and patterns of behavior that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of an organization’s health and safety management. Organizations with a positive safety culture are characterized by communications founded on mutual trust, by shared perceptions of the importance of safety and by confidence in the efficacy of preventive measures” – ACSNI Human Factors Study Group: Third report – Organising for Safety HSE Books (1993)



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## **Methodology:**

Historical, narrative, and case study approach were adopted in this write-up, and all these have elements of descriptive methodology .

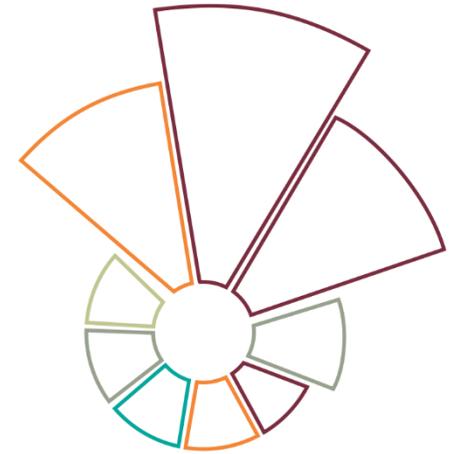


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## **Research results:**

To develop a progressive prevention culture in SHE practice, some very important factors need to be in place. These factors amongst others include:

- Socio-economic components of the people, society or organization (poverty, level of education, existing infrastructure, social welfare system, available health facilities, etc.)
- Appropriate SHE Competency, Resources and Knowledge
- Good Policies (goals, plan, roadmap for implementing and embedding a prevention/safety culture)
- Sound Procedures (SOPs)
- Training and motivation to encourage people involvement and buy-in
- Leadership commitment in the area of “casting the right shadow”, making available time, finance and people for implementing SHE Agenda,
- Accessible and approachable leadership
- Effective communication (share SHE vision across all levels of the society or organization)
- Knowledgeable citizens or employees
- Functional tools for reporting unsafe conditions and unsafe behaviours
- Trust and respect for self and others
- Celebration of success (motivation)
- Effective investigation system
- Enforcement of accountability



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## Analysis of results:

### **Socio-determinants of health**

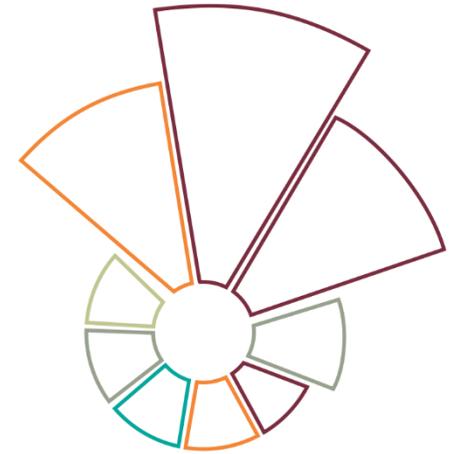
The factors required for the development of prevention culture in SHE Practice are multi-faceted. They are a combination of tangible and intangible elements. Principal amongst them are socio-eco-cultural elements which bother on poverty, illiteracy, absence of standard health facilities and resources, absence of safe public infrastructure (good and motorable roads, road-worthy vehicles, good town-urban planning), poor housekeeping, unavailability of well resourced manpower, inappropriate funding of SHE programmes, the will and discipline to enforce extant EHS laws and regulations amongst others.

It is generally known that poverty engenders risky behaviours like promiscuity, prostitution, unprotected sex, and some other anti-social behaviours like street fighting, gang-wars, petty theft, pick-pockets etc., that are detrimental to development of Prevention Culture in SHE Practice in the society.

It has been scientifically proven that apart from germs from the environment and bio-genetic disposition, people's health and safety is largely influenced by socio-eco-cultural elements which are otherwise known as social determinants of health.

Social determinants of health in a large extent affect the success rate in the development of prevention culture in SHE Practice.

Safety culture as a way of life in virtually all strata of most third world countries leave more to be desired, and are mainly influenced by poverty, ill-education and lack of infrastructure. These socio-eco-cultural factors have in no small measure retarded the growth and development of prevention culture in SHE Practice in domestic, public and industrial domains.



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## Analysis of results / Discussion:

Generally, the developing of prevention culture in SHE Practice is much easier in advanced economies because of good infrastructure, transparency in leadership, appropriate enlightenment, appropriate deployment of resources, enforcement of EHS statutory and regulatory requirements, and high standard of living amongst others.

On the flip-side, the right environment for the developing of prevention culture is currently not available in many third world countries and organizations in those countries mainly from socio-eco-cultural disadvantages.

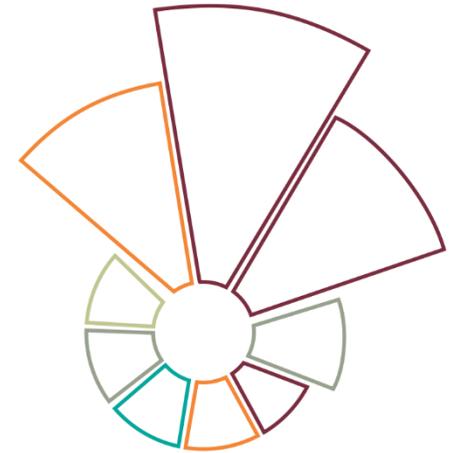
As a result of inadequate SHE knowledge amongst the majority of the populace, little political will-power to enforce extant EHS statutory and regulatory requirements, absence of genuine commitment to make positive change in the wellbeing of majority of the people by leaders in third world countries, millions of people in these countries are daily exposed to avoidable hazards, that have high potential to cause harm, and many lives are negatively impacted daily by these exposures.

Some of the hazards people in third world countries are daily exposed to include poor town-planning situation, unsafe housing designs (no provision for exit in some storey buildings, no consideration for adequate illumination and ventilation) poor road network, inadequate health facilities, poorly planned and poorly managed public transport system, poor social infrastructure, poor support system, poor waste management system (unkempt environment with heaps and mountains of garbage by roadsides), low safe sex education/awareness amongst young adults and the general public, inadequately equipped safety and health facilities, etc.

Hundreds of lives are lost in third world countries annually from avoidable circumstances, for example, many vehicles on the roads are not road-worthy, many of the roads are not motorable and unsafe to use, officials empowered to enforce road worthiness of vehicles compromise in their duty due to personal gains.

As a result of reluctance by regulatory bodies to enforce extant SHE laws, many organizations are emboldened to flagrantly disregard statutory SHE requirements. Such organizations do not provide the right environment for safety, wellbeing and mental health to thrive for their workers. Workplaces are dimly lit, ventilation inadequate, hushed-up (very short) break-time session, extended workhours without rest or consideration for the health of the workers, lack of safety training for workforce, inadequate capability and competency enhancement programme for workers running machines, inadequate provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) to mention but a few.

Some extant EHS laws are obsolete. EHS bills before legislative houses are not given required attention for timely reading and passing into law.



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## Discussion:

Despite the seemingly overwhelming challenging issues militating against progressive development of Prevention Culture in SHE Practice particularly in third world countries, all hope is not lost, a close study of the situation reveals a positive move in the development of prevention culture in SHE Practice over time, though at a very slow pace.

One area some encouraging strides have taken place is in the recent time, are in the area of safety awareness and training. Good EHS training outfits like have been established and manned by competent persons, thus a growing size of persons are being trained in contemporary SHE Management System regularly. As more people acquire SHE knowledge and empowerment, it is only going to be a matter of time before the pace of developing prevention culture in SHE Practice takes a big leap in positive direction naturally.

Another factor positively impacting development of prevention culture in SHE Practice in third world countries is “globalization”, a case in hand is the global war against plastic pollution. As we speak the Federal Ministry of Environment is putting together Regulations for the abatement of plastic pollution in Nigeria.

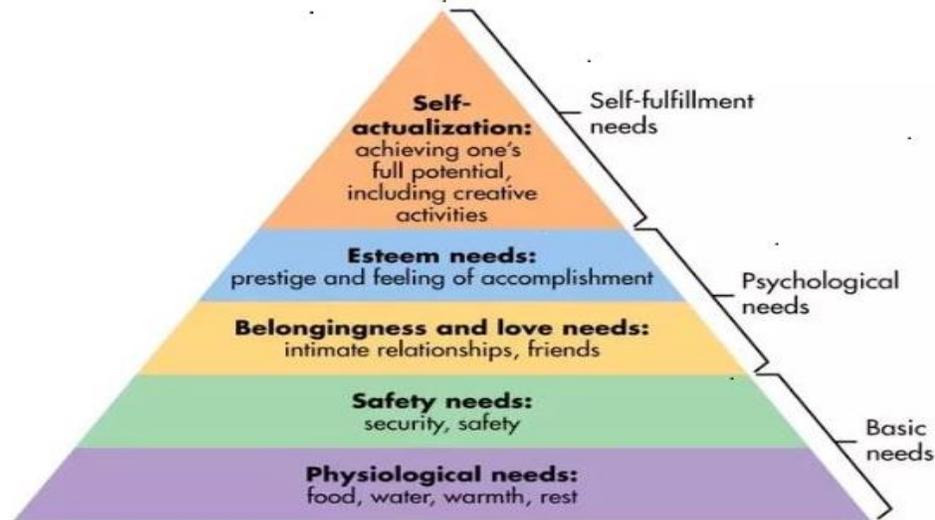
With increased SHE awareness and competency, and government obvious commitment to grow the economy, with demography in many third world countries positively tilted to the youths who are naturally restive and in search of knowledge, with the prevalence of social media which is a good platform for easy dissemination of information. The horizon looks brighter for a steady and progressive development of prevention culture in SHE Practice in third world countries in no distant time.



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## Conclusion and recommendations:

EHS organizations and personnel should not relent but continue to empower the people and the public through qualitative SHE enlightenment and training, and as human development index improves, issues or poverty, education, communication and GDP improve, there would be a naturally shift in the priority of generality of the people from basic physiological needs to higher needs that strengthen the development of prevention culture in SHE Practice, as clearly typified by Maslow's hierarchy of needs.



Saul McLead (updated 2018) Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs – Simply Psychology



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In the light of this positive potential reality, sure steps need to be taken by SHE Practitioners, SHE Organizations, Civil Organizations and NGOs to continually encourage the development of prevention culture in SHE Practice, for the safety, health and the wellbeing of the people.

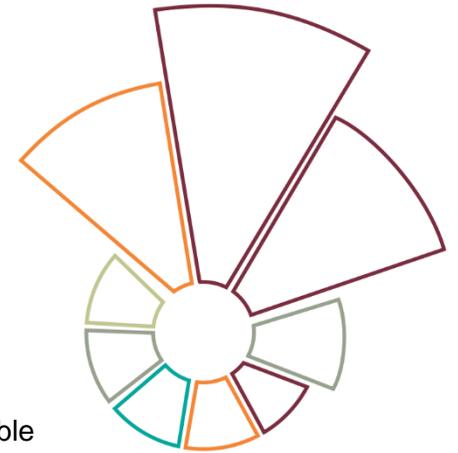
These steps amongst others include:

- Focused and unrelented outcry for improved safety and health practices in public and industrial sectors.

## **Conclusion and recommendations...continues**

- EHS Organizations and other stakeholders should lobby Government and Legislative authorities to enact safety, health and environment laws to protect the generality of the public from avoidable exposures.
- Interested safety and health organizations, as well as interested members of the public should participate in the monitoring of the implementation of budget allocated to SHE development in their countries.
- SHE Organizations, organized labour, civil organizations, religious groups, NGOS should collaborate with public oriented media organizations (CSR) to provide a platform for a sustained public SHE awareness campaign, and creating of awareness on responsible lifestyles.
- Review of school curricula to incorporate SHE elements, even from primary school level.
- Social recreation centres should be created, existing ones should be strengthened to adequately engage and enforce positive youthful behaviours and lifestyles, and discourage vices and anti-social activities that negate development of prevention culture in SHE Practice.
- Governments should effectively strengthen and enforce existing public and industrial SHE laws to protect the public and workers from avoidable hazardous exposures.
- Willful defaulters of public safety and health procedures should be appropriately sanctioned in line with the laws of the land.

The benefit of developing prevention culture in SHE Practice cannot be over emphasized, so it is very important we all get enlisted as ambassadors of EHS to invest our time, energy and resources for the development of prevention culture in EHS Practice in every area we have influence, in our home, in the workplace, in the school, and in the community we live...



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# Thanks



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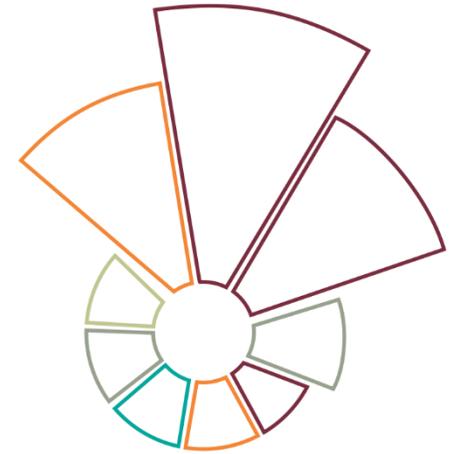
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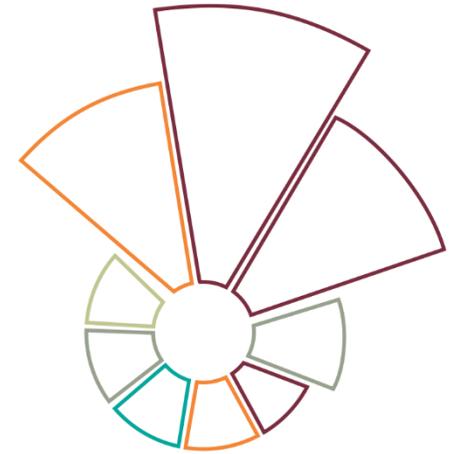
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