



# Empowering communities: a way towards stronger health systems



Health Management in action:  
Fostering health systems' resilience

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An EHMA Webinar Series

#EHMAWebinars



# Our speaker

## Ms. Caroline Costongs

Director at EuroHealthNet and expert in public health, health equity and health promotion



# Agenda



- **13.30- 13.40 (10 minutes)**: Welcome and introduction
- **13.40 - 14:00 (20 minutes)**: Presentation on Empowering communities: a way towards stronger health systems
- **14.00 - 14.15 (15 minutes)**: Q & A



# About EHMA

**OUR VISION** is excellent health management for a healthy Europe.

**OUR MISSION** is to support the spread of knowledge on effective health management.

**OUR VALUES** are excellence, quality, inclusiveness, relevance, and respect.





- We are the **only membership organisation in Europe** to bring together the full health management ecosystem.
- We are a recognised and respected **amplifier of best practices** in the evolution of health management.
- We provide an environment where **evidence, challenge and experience are valued**, and complex debates on current topics can take place.





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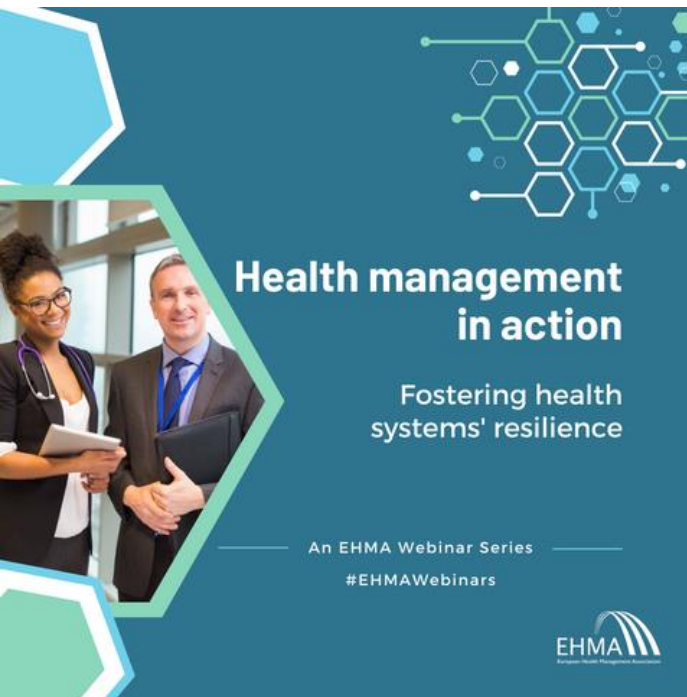
Become part of Europe's preeminent community of practice on health management.

Discover more at [www.ehma.org/join-us/](http://www.ehma.org/join-us/)



## About this webinar series

Our webinar series, 'Health Management in action: fostering health systems' resilience', discusses **health management topics** that are crucial **to improve health systems preparedness and response**.




The graphic features a dark teal background with a network of hexagons and lines in light blue and green. On the left, a photograph shows a woman in a white lab coat and glasses holding a tablet, and a man in a dark suit and blue tie holding a laptop. The text is white and positioned to the right of the photo.

**Health management  
in action**

Fostering health  
systems' resilience

— An EHMA Webinar Series —  
#EHMAWebinars



EHMA  
European Health Management Association



# Empowering communities: a way towards stronger health systems

**Caroline Costongs**

**Director**

EHMA 2022 Webinar Series 'Health Management in Action: fostering health systems' resilience – 27 October



# EuroHealthNet

The Partnership for Health,  
Equity and Wellbeing

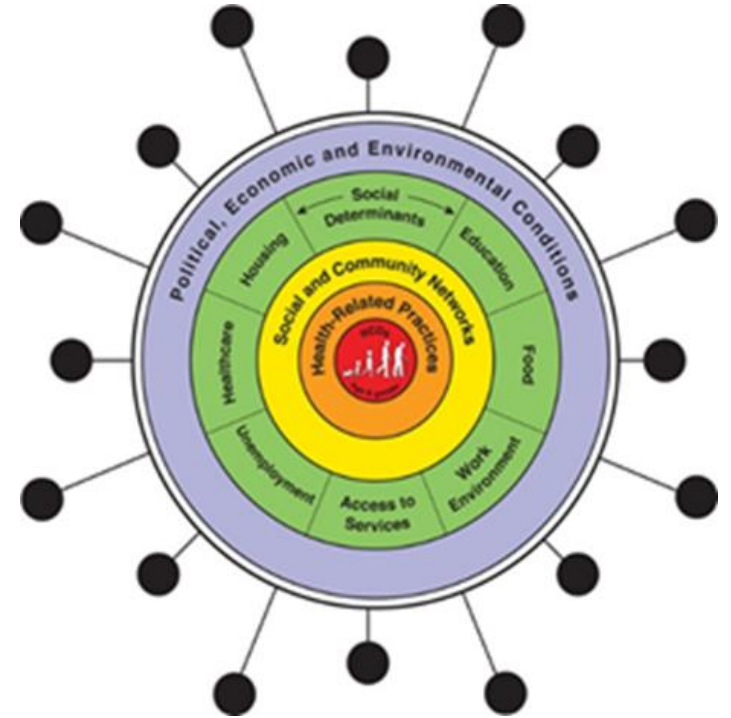
Improve and sustain health

Reduce health inequalities



# Lessons from COVID-19

- **Unequal impact of the pandemic (syndemic)** – with long term consequences
- **Systematically reach out to and include** views from communities and groups of people in society
  - Capacity-building for inclusive health governance
  - Create systematic and regular mechanism for social participation & foster social movements
  - Trust in society can only be built bottom up and in co-creation
- Preparedness plans should assess and mitigate the “**collateral damage**” of response measures across sectors.
  - BCI units & multi-disciplinary sciences
  - Mental health support, social protection and support measures
  - Empowering communities, boost health promotion and disease prevention & build resilience and wellbeing



# Community based, health promoting health services

1. **Principles** of health promotion and prevention as part of health services
  - Sensitive to various levels of health literacy (teach-back method & communication)
  - Positive health approach (“what matters to you?” vs “what is the matter with you?”)
  - Integrated ‘holistic’ care – including advice on stress relief, diet, PA, sleep
2. Health services implement **specific** health promotion and prevention **interventions**
  - Screening, vaccination, check-ups, smoking cessation, m-health
  - Preventative home visits and outreach to vulnerable communities
  - Strengthening health before operations to optimize recovery
3. Health services engage with health promotion and prevention **in other sectors**
  - Addressing social need, addictions, substance misuse, sexual violence, abuse, mental health
  - Urban health, school-based health promotion, health in workplaces, active travel, nutrition policies, physical activity promotion, social prescribing

# EuroHealthNet Country Exchange Visit on Social Prescribing

- Address non-medical but health related needs
- GP refers patients to appropriate community resources through a link worker
- Social activities, physical activity, arts/culture, nature-based solutions

[Link to CEV report](#)





 **Canada**

'Community connector'

**Sweden**

**Denmark**

**Finland**

'Wellbeing coach'

 **UK**

'Link worker'

 **Netherlands**

**China**

'Seikatsu Shien'  
 **Japan**

 **USA**

'Health Lead Advocate'

**Portugal**

**Spain**

**Germany**

 **India**

'ASHA worker'

**South Korea**

 **Singapore**

'Wellbeing coordinator'

**Brazil**

 **Australia**

'Community connector'

**New Zealand**



"Delivering a social revolution in health and wellbeing"

ASHA = Accredited Social Health Activist

## Portugal

- Since 2018 in USF Baxia, Lisbon (16.000 patients) poorer community – older people and migrants



## Slovenia

- Long tradition of community health workers (often nurses)
- Health Promotion Centres (as part of primary care) with multi-disciplinary teams
- NIJZ is responsible for services and training
- Part of health insurance packages
- WHO case study 2020

**NIJZ** Nacionalni inštitut  
za javno zdravje

## Hungary

- Health Promotion Offices since 2013
- 100 offices
- Low budget, minimally evaluated

## Italy - Emilia Romagna

- Certification system for PA organisations and gyms that GPs can refer patients to

## Austria

- Pilot in 9 primary care facilities since 21/22.
- Training for link workers
- Wide range of services (incl legal advice and career counselling)
- Quality assurance (evaluation and documentation is key)

Gesundheit Österreich  
GmbH

## Finland

- Physical activity on prescription since 2001 - Arts and culture on prescription since 2015
- Pilot in Lapland in 2020-22 to address loneliness.
- Evaluation: costs 33.000 EUR for 60-80 referrals in community with 10.000 people



LAPIN SAIRAANHOITOPIIRI  
LAPPI BUOHCCEDIKŠUNBIIRE

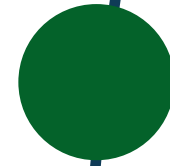
## Netherlands

- 30% of municipalities apply social prescribing
- Welfare coaches (for older people) fall prevention, loneliness
- Accredited lifestyle coaches (for obese people)
- Combined lifestyle interventions – as part of health insurance



National Institute for Public Health  
and the Environment  
*Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport*

# Social Prescribing



Social, environment, culture and health sector working together



Monitoring and quality control  
Finances and measuring effectiveness – still to be resolved



Upskilling professionals already in the system is best way forward.



Ensure adequate capacities of social and other services



Engaging children and hard-to-reach communities



# Supporting bottom-up, community initiatives

*INHERIT Case study*  
Gardening with Green Gyms and Meat Free Monday  
Report: [Implementing triple-win case studies](#)

Remove legal and structural barriers, provide funding and facilitate sharing of experiences



# Inclusive health governance

Levels of participation vary from highly participatory to more institutional.

Three principles:

1. Inclusiveness
2. Intensity
3. Influence



In-person, 'open for all' forums (i.e. townhall meetings, public hearings, open-mic events)



Consultative or deliberative methods with attendance by invitation (i.e. focus groups, policy dialogues, citizen panels)



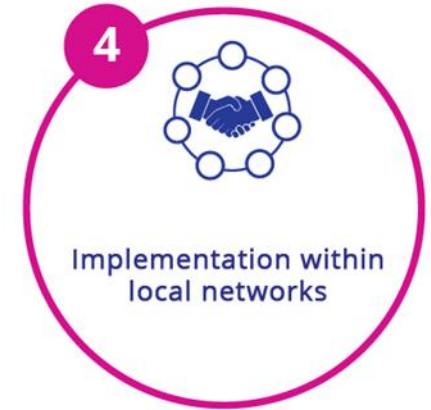
Formalised mechanisms with fixed seats for communities and/or civil society (i.e. health council, committees, citizen advisory boards)

# Technology can empower communities and improve health

If they are designed and applied to meet the needs of different **groups facing vulnerability**, who have the most to gain from their use.

This requires

- **securing safe digital environments** and infrastructure
- **improving access** of people with or facing vulnerability
- **engaging groups we want to reach more** in the development and testing of these technologies
- **improving digital health literacy** as well as skills of health professionals and the wider community



[ehealth4all@pharos.nl](mailto:ehealth4all@pharos.nl)

# Pathways for progress

WHO Collaborating centre Austria - Briefing on Health Promoting Primary Health Care

EC MS HSPA report on prevention and promotion

WHO Wellbeing Framework

EU Council conclusions on Economy of Wellbeing

EU Conference on the Future of Europe – follow up

WHO Behavioural and Cultural Insights Framework

WHO Europe Digital Health Flagship & EC Digital Europe Programme & Label2Enable

EC Recovery and Resilience Plans & EuroHealthNet Semester Analysis

DG REFORM Technical Support Instrument

EC Pact for Skills & BeWell project

European Health Union - Etc...



European  
Commission



World Health  
Organization



# In short

1. In crisis responses we need **mechanisms to consider SDoH and avoid long-term consequences**. This involves **engagement with people** most impacted - in systematic ways.
2. We need to shift to **community based, health promoting health systems. Focus on prevention**. This takes time. But can and must be done.
3. **Social prescribing** is a promising approach to include SDoH in health systems reform.
4. Facilitate effective **community engagement**. Social movements and civil society are **the cornerstone for transformation. Inclusive health governance**.
5. Explore use of technologies while **improving digital health literacy and close gaps**.
6. Advocate, using relevant EU and WHO processes to **achieve change**.

# Thank you

## Contact us

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## Follow us



[www.eurohealthnet.eu](http://www.eurohealthnet.eu)



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# Q & A

Type your questions in the chat box  
or raise your hand to ask your question live.



# 90-second survey

Your feedback is important to us,  
as it helps us shape and improve our webinars





# Next webinar



## Towards a better EU health preparedness and response: existing gaps and solutions

**When: Thurs., 3 November 2022, 13.30-14.15 CEST**



This webinar is co-funded by the EU4Health Programme of the European Union. Views and opinions are of the speakers only.



# Thank you!

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