



European
Commission

2021 EU HEALTH AWARD

Cancer Prevention and Mental Health



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Health and
Food Safety



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Foreword

by Stella Kyriakides

European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety



This year's EU Health Award recognises vital work being done in two important fields – cancer prevention and mental health.

The right to health – both physical and mental – is fundamental to all. The ancient Greeks, and later the Romans, embraced the concept of 'a healthy mind in a healthy body', and thus, we define health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

It is vital when discussing any health topic that we focus on prevention, as prevention is key for both physical and mental health.

Prevention of course has many pillars. And possibly one of the most crucial ones is access to information. Information that is easy to understand and that also addresses stigma. We want young people, especially, to have access to the knowledge that will enable them to develop healthy lifestyle habits that will greatly increase their prospects of enjoying a healthy and active adulthood. It is without doubt the right of every child to get off to a good start in life.

That's why this year's Award partly focuses on and recognises the important work being done to promote communication and health literacy on cancer prevention among all children and young people. Europe's Beating Cancer Plan includes a revision of the European Code Against Cancer thus ensuring that all people, of all ages, but especially the young, have access to simple, clear information on how they can reduce their cancer risk.

But mental health is also high on everyone's agenda today.

After over two years, we are very aware of the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic. We are also increasingly aware of its huge impact on mental health across all age groups. Even before COVID-19, a reported 84 million people across the EU were affected by mental health challenges. The pandemic has intensified pre-existing problems and subjected us all to long-term, chronic stress and loneliness. That's why we are especially grateful to those working to help alleviate the mental health impact of COVID-19, and delighted to recognise them for their efforts.

The EU Health Award has always focused on urgent topics, starting with its first edition when it recognised initiatives to stop the Ebola outbreak ongoing at that moment. The topics change, but our message does not: we greatly appreciate investment and commitment to public health at every level, from the individual to the community. We believe in our motto and you are living proof of it: Together, Stronger. This could not be more relevant today, with an ongoing global pandemic and an illegal and senseless war in Ukraine that has forced millions of people to leave their lives behind.

I am convinced that it is this spirit of solidarity and cooperation that will enable us to support all those in need. For indeed, together we are stronger.

Thank you, sincerely, for your hard work.

Stella Kyriakides

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Introduction

Civil society plays an important role in supporting public health actions and contributing to the development of health initiatives. To recognise their valuable contribution, the Commission launched the first edition of the EU Health Award for NGOs in 2015. Since then, it has also invited local authorities and their affiliated organisations, educational institutions and other not-for-profit organisations to share initiatives that have had a real impact at local, regional, national, European or even international level.

The aim of the EU Health Award is not only to honour past engagement but also to encourage the pursuit of the inspiring work that these organisations are doing all over Europe in the field of public health.

Since the EU Health Award was set up seven years ago, more than 400 organisations submitted remarkable initiatives undertaken in different health fields such as fighting against **Ebola** (2015) and **Antimicrobial Resistance** (2016), preventing **Tobacco use** (2018), reducing **Obesity in children** (2019) and promoting **vaccination and healthy lifestyles** (2020). The themes for the EU Health Award change every year, and prizes have ranged from EUR 1 500 for shortlisted participants to EUR 100 000 for winners.

The 7th edition of the EU Health Award highlights and rewards the efforts and achievements of the following initiatives in two different topics:

- Initiatives of cities, NGOs or other civil society organisations, and educational institutions seeking to promote communication and health literacy on cancer prevention among children and young people (from 6 to 24 years old).
- Community-based initiatives alleviating the mental health impact of COVID-19.

110 applications from 15 different EU countries were submitted and examined against the Award criteria. The European Commission selected the shortlisted and winning initiatives based on an evaluation by a Jury composed of Commission officials and external high-level experts. As no submissions were received in the 'city' category for the Award on cancer prevention, this category was not awarded.

The shortlisted and winning organisations for 2021 were announced at the EU Health Award Ceremony, which was held as a hybrid event (with physical presence and online attendance) in the context of the EU Health Platform Policy annual meeting on 4 May 2022 in Brussels.

These good practices are meant to be useful, inspiring and transferable ways to promote cancer prevention and mental health in the European Union.

You will find in the following pages a summary of the winners of the 2021 EU Health Award as well as information on how to register in the EU Health Policy Platform to keep yourself informed about the latest news on EU health matters.

More information is available on the EU Health Award website:

https://ec.europa.eu/health/award/home_en

The EU Health Award is funded under the [EU4Health Programme 2021-2027](#).

Jury



Chair - Isabel de la Mata

Dr Isabel de la Mata is currently the Principal Adviser for Health and Crisis Management in the European Commission. Previously, she worked as Counsellor for Health and Consumers at the Permanent Representation of Spain to the EU, as Deputy Director General for Health Planning at the Spanish Ministry of Health and as Advisor to the Vice-Minister of Health. In addition, she has worked for WHO, the Pan-American Health Organisation, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation. Dr de la Mata graduated in Medicine and Surgery at the University of the Basque Country in 1983 and holds post-graduate degrees from the University of Leuven and Paris. She is a specialist in Preventive Medicine and Public Health.

Award on Cancer Prevention



Marisa Fernández Esteban

Marisa Fernández Esteban is Deputy Head of the Sport Unit, European Commission. She holds a degree of Law from the Autonomía University of Madrid (1992), earning an ERASMUS award for her academic semester in the University of Amsterdam. She holds a PhD in European Law from the European University Institute in Florence (1996) and was a lecturer of European and Constitutional Law at the Autonomía University of Madrid between 1996 and 2001. She joined the European Commission in 2001 and has dealt with competition policy, copyright and audiovisual legislation. Between 2014 and 2015, she was the assistant to the Director General of DG EAC. She is currently the deputy head of the sport unit. She is the author of three academic books on European Law and media.



Alex Patak

Since 1994, Alex Patak has been at the Joint Research Centre in Ispra (Italy), where he has been working on three-dimensional medical imaging. From 2003 to 2017, he was responsible for the Bioinformatics team at the Molecular Biology and Genomics Unit of the Institute for Health and Consumer Protection in Ispra. He is now a team leader at Knowledge for Health & Consumer Safety and is responsible for the Collaborative Doctoral Partnership programme in Genomics and Bioinformatics, working on the application of artificial intelligence to omics data and Microbiome. Mr Patak graduated in Medicine and Surgery from the School of Medicine at “Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona”, Barcelona (Spain) and holds a Master in Medical Bioengineering from the “Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña”.



Jan-Willem Van de Loo

PhD Jan-Willem van de Loo, Cancer Theme Lead since 2019, has been a Policy and Scientific Officer at the European Commission in charge of cancer research since 2003. From Sep 2019 - Jul 2021, he led a team co-creating the Horizon Europe Mission on Cancer. Other policy initiatives include contributions to the Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan, public-public and public private R&I partnerships. He graduated in Biology at the University of Utrecht in 1991, following a year at the UW-Madison Medical School Graduate Program. He worked as a junior scientist on blood coagulation at Sanquin, Amsterdam and obtained his PhD in cell biology at the Centre for Human Genetics at the University of Leuven in 1999. He held three postdoctoral positions in cancer research, including a Marie-Curie postdoctoral fellowship at the European Institute of Oncology in Milan.



João Breda

Dr João Breda is Special Adviser of WHO/Europe Regional Director for the establishment of Sub-Regional Offices and is based in Greece.

Until recently, he headed the WHO European Office for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (NCD Office), which provided support to 53 Member States in the WHO European Region. In 2019, the team he was leading was given an Award of Excellence announced by Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

Prior to that, Dr João Breda was Programme Manager for Nutrition, Physical activity and Obesity at the WHO Regional Office for Europe, a role he held for 11 years. Before joining WHO, Dr Breda was the WHO/Europe focal point in Portugal for alcohol, nutrition and physical activity, and was a representative on the High-Level Group on Nutrition & Physical Activity and the European Platform on Diet, Nutrition and Physical Activity of the European Union.

Dr João Breda has a PhD in Food Consumption & Nutritional Sciences from Porto University, a Master of Business Administration, a Master's in public health and a Bachelor's Degree in Nutritional Sciences. He has received many scientific and academic awards, published more than 250 original reports, and more than 20 books.



Nikolai Pushkarev

Nikolai Pushkarev is Senior Policy Manager for healthy environments and Policy Coordinator at the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), a leading civil society network working to improve health and strengthen the voice of public health in Europe. As senior policy manager, Nikolai leads EPHA's activities on food systems and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) prevention, promoting policies to tackle the common risk factors for NCDs, and on advancing a transition towards sustainable food systems with health-enabling food environments. As policy

coordinator, he contributes to the strategic alignment of EPHA's policy activities for enhanced impact. Previous work experiences were in the areas of human rights, environment, energy, and in the cultural and private sectors. He earned an MA in European Law from Maastricht University and a postgraduate degree in agricultural economics through the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.



Wendy Yared

Dr Wendy Yared is the Director of the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL), a pan-European alliance of national and regional cancer leagues. ECL was created in 1980, and its members provide services to over 489 million European citizens for a vision of a Europe Free of Cancer.

Dr Yared has over 25 years' experience in international public health and policy, most of which is in Europe. Her other notable professional roles have been with the World Health Organization, the European Parliament, Johns Hopkins University, the United States Public Health Service, and with the US government in sub-Saharan Africa. Her academic training is as a Doctor of Public Health in International Health Systems from Johns Hopkins, a Master of Public Health in Health Policy from UC Berkeley, and an undergraduate diploma in psychology, also from the University of California.

Award on Mental Health



Despo Sergiou

Despo Sergiou is a Policy Officer, SNE-Youth Policy and Programmes in Unit B3: Youth, Volunteer, Solidarity and Traineeship Office, at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture.

Prior to that, she was the Counsellor of Education, Youth, Culture and Sport at the Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the EU (2016-2021), where she was involved in various EU priorities and actively followed the discussions in various Council preparatory bodies on the effects of the Covid-19 crisis in the areas of Education, Youth, Culture and Sport. Between 2000 and 2016, she was a primary school teacher, while for several years she actively participated in various committees and non-governmental organisations, including the Cyprus Centre for supporting people addicted to drugs and other substances.

Ms Sergiou has a Master's degree in Education: Pedagogical Sciences, Intercultural Education and Psychology and a Bachelor's degree in Education.



Nicoline Tamsma

Nicoline Tamsma is a Policy Officer at the European Commission's DG for Health and Food Safety, Unit Health Promotion, Disease Prevention, Financial Instruments, where mental health is part of her policy portfolio.

A social scientist by training, she has been working in the field of European health policy and international affairs in various capacities over the past 25 years. She was an advisor for International Affairs at the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment the Netherlands and at the Netherlands Institute for Care and Welfare. Other previous posts include work on European policy and health systems research at the Nuffield Institute for Health in Leeds (UK). She also co-ordinated cross-national efforts on integrated local HIV/AIDS policies for WHO Europe.

Her involvement in the European health community includes (past) roles as President of EuroHealthNet, a member of the European Health Forum Gastein Advisory Committee, and a board member of the European Health Management Association.



Hana Velecká

Hana Velecká started her work in the European Commission in 2005 and worked on the European Social Fund for the Czech Republic. She has been working on the disability issues since 2014. During her career, she dealt with antidiscrimination, social protection, independent living, employment, gender issues, mental health, health, transport and the European Semester. She gained experience with independent living, health and mental health care reforms by working on the EU

funding and policy making and monitoring. She follows the implementation of the new Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.

Apart from policies, her primary responsibility is for the EU Disability Card initiative. She also acts as a secretary of the Disability Platform, which is an expert group composed of representatives of the Commission, Member States, and EU-level civil society organisations.

She graduated in history at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University in Prague and afterwards studied international politics at CERIS in Brussels. She also worked on EU affairs and social inclusion at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Prague.



Alexander Grabenhofer-Eggerth

Alexander Grabenhofer-Eggerth is head of the Department of Psychosocial Health at the Austrian National Public Health Institute (GÖG) and member of the Advisory Board for Mental Health of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health. He is also head of the coordination centre of the national suicide prevention programme SUPRA. Mr Grabenhofer-Eggerth graduated with a Master's degree in psychology in Vienna in 1998. After three years as a staff member in outpatient aftercare for psychiatric patients, he worked as a researcher and counsellor in the addiction service of the City of Vienna. In 2008, he moved to the Austrian National Public Health Institute as a project manager in the field of addiction, health services research and strategy development. In 2017, he became head of the newly founded Department of Psychosocial Health, and has continued to serve as the head of that department since then.



Ledia Lazëri

Dr Ledia Lazëri has been the Regional Adviser for Mental Health at the WHO Regional Office for Europe since May 2021. A native of Albania, she trained and worked as a psychiatrist in her home country, contributing to the education of medical students and later to the national reform of mental health policy and services. Having joined WHO in 2000, Dr Lazëri expanded her scope of work beyond the Balkans region through her work in the Mental Health Project of the Stability Pact in South Eastern Europe and later in Turkey, where she led a large EU-funded WHO project on Improving Services for People with Disabilities. She took up duties as Regional Adviser in May 2021, after serving as the WHO Representative to various European countries, where she led the WHO technical cooperation. In her function as Regional Adviser, Dr Lazëri leads a team that brings together expertise in various areas: policy and services, rights and advocacy, communication and promotion in mental health, tasked, among others, with implementing the WHO European Framework for Action in Mental Health 2021-2025 and with supporting the pan-European Mental Health Coalition.



Solvejg Wallyn

Since 2009, Solvejg Wallyn has been a policy officer in the Flanders Agency for Care and Health in Belgium, where she is dealing with all international and bilateral matters in health that are in the remit of the regional competences. These competences have been enlarged to include primary care, mental health care, elderly care and some aspects of specialised care. Ms Wallyn has a degree in law from Brussels University. She has worked in Sciensano and helped to transpose the two EU Directives on Genetically Modified Organisms and Micro-organisms into Belgian legislation. She was administrator of the European Programme on Intervention Epidemiology and the EU Rapid Response to Health Crises. She set up the Committee on Ethical issues in Sciensano and worked in the European Commission, Health Threats Unit, DG for Health and was scientific officer in the Executive Agency.



Cancer Prevention

NGOs category



FIRST PRIZE WINNER

George D. Behrakis Research Lab,
Hellenic Cancer Society (Greece)

WEBSITE: <https://smokefreegreece.gr/en/>

SMOKE FREE GREECE





George D. Behrakis Research Lab, Hellenic Cancer Society Initiative

The main objective of SMOKE FREE GREECE is to raise a smoke-free generation, enhance youth awareness on the risks of tobacco addiction, invest in health promotion and education and prevent all tobacco-related cancers. The SMOKE FREE GREECE initiative coordinates a series of actions aiming to reduce the use of tobacco products in Greece, with a special focus on youth.

Investing in the health education of school age children, SMOKE FREE GREECE has contributed to reducing overall smoking prevalence and smoking initiation among adolescents in Greece. Reduced smoking prevalence will lead to fewer cancer cases and improved public health quality. Our youth-friendly approach based on positive messages and colourful images engages adolescents, who become our best ambassadors. Elementary, middle and high school students are educated on healthy life style benefits. Adopting a holistic lifestyle approach, the initiative promotes awareness on various public health issues beyond those related to smoking.

The SMOKE FREE GREECE educational programme includes: school-based

interventions; train-the-trainer workshops for parents, teachers, health professionals educational material for students, teachers, parents, health professionals; annual school conferences; student competitions on tobacco prevention; collaborations with other NGOs; social media.

Our specifically designed school-based interventions for 10- to 17-year-old students focus on the positive reasons for not using tobacco.

From 2014-2022 more than 61,000 students participated in 1,841 interventions and since 2010, some 2,500 teachers and 700 healthcare professionals have completed train-the-trainer workshops. Our educational material can also be found online and one of our printed booklets for primary school readers reached more than 438,500 students across Greece.

More than 7,000 students have participated in educational, theatrical and musical activities through the "Education for a SMOKEFREE GENERATION" annual school conference, and more than 7,000 students have participated in related competitions.

SECOND PRIZE WINNER

EVERYTHING for HER (Association of cancer affected and treated women) (Croatia)

WEBSITE: <http://www.svezanju.hr/>

Mom, be healthy



EVERYTHING for HER (Association of cancer affected and treated women) Initiative

In 2017 EVERYTHING for HER started the pink October project "Mom, be healthy" to educate children aged 6 to 18 on healthy lifestyles and cancer prevention to encourage their mothers, women of all ages, especially younger ones, to regularly monitor breast health.

The aim of the project was also to encourage women to respond to preventive screenings as part of the National Early Cancer Detection Programs. Children can have a positive impact on parents and can encourage more responsible behaviour, so we designed a project in which children participate in conveying preventive and educational messages to their mothers and other female family members and encourage them to have more regular checkups.

During October 2021, the project was implemented in 76 Croatian primary and high schools and 1 kindergarten and reached more than 27,000 students, mothers and teachers. The students

personalised educational leaflets with their and their mother's names and gave them to their mothers with the message "Mom, be healthy".

The project improved children's health literacy through school activities; like writing educational and supportive messages and making posters, and participating in conversations and lectures about health and cancer prevention. Students and teachers took group photos with pink balloons and made short videos with the message "Mom, be healthy", which were shared through social media and reached more than 161,880 people.

The project "Mom, be healthy" was selected among the three best NGO's projects in 2018 by the Croatian Public Relations Association. The project is implemented under the auspices of the Ministry of Science and Education, the Croatian Institute of Public Health and the Croatian Health Insurance.

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

Loono (Czechia)

WEBSITE: <https://www.loono.cz/en/prevention/cancer-prevention>

I touch them every month - Boobs and balls



Loono Initiative

The “I touch them every month - Boobs and balls” project aims to show people the importance of prevention and to stress detecting the disease in the early stage for successful treatment. We lecture people on cancer prevention by sticking to healthy prevention principles (healthy lifestyle, vaccination, the negative impact of smoking and alcohol consumption, using sunscreen, and more), and undergoing preventive health check-ups, screening programmes accessible with public health insurance, and regular self-examinations (breasts, testicles, and moles).

Since January 2020 we have organised over 254 training sessions (workshops and webinars at schools, firms, festivals, and family centres) and trained over 30,738 people with the #boobsandballs project. We also educate the public via social media and our website. Our social media channels have almost 45 000 followers and we annually reach more than 2.5 million people in Czechia with our campaigns and educational content. Our website traffic reaches up to 250,000 visits every year. We distributed

educational materials to 50 Czech schools. So far, 58 people let us know we helped them detect their oncological disease in time to deal with it.

We operate state-wide and cooperate with faculties of medicine and medical student associations. We talk about health and prevention in a positive, entertaining, and comprehensible manner to motivate people toward long-term and sustainable change. At the same time, we only use evidence-based information and verified sources to create our content. To develop the project further, we plan, among other things, to launch an app in mid-2022, which will notify the user about recommended preventive check-ups or instruct them to do breast, testicle, or skin self-check-up.

Our content can be modified to foreign legal frameworks and prevention or screening programmes in other countries. In the same way, non-profit organisations can cooperate with faculties of medicine and medical associations around the world.

SHORTLISTED



KWF Dutch Cancer Society (The Netherlands)

A SMOKE-FREE WORLD. GET USED TO IT

Every week hundreds of children become addicted to smoking. More than 50% will eventually die -- each year some 20.000 people in Holland -- because of the effects of smoking. Smoking can cause cancer, heart, lung and vascular diseases and some 30% of all cancer cases could be prevented by not smoking. Despite these figures, people still think it is normal that children start smoking cigarettes.

KWF Dutch Cancer Society, with The Dutch Heart Foundation and the Lung Foundation Netherlands, joined forces and initiated the programme Smoke-free Generation in order to protect children against the damage of smoke from tobacco products. This programme follows a strategic path, a roadmap towards a smoke-free generation.

Children born since 2017 should be smoke-free since they were conceived, from their mother's pregnancy and going to a smoke-free day care and school, to enjoying smoke-free playgrounds and sports grounds, and living in an environment where it is hard to buy cigarettes and when they can find them, they are sold in unattractive packaging and are too expensive to buy. Our goal is to have a Smoke-free Generation in 2035. Kids born in 2017 will be 18 years old then.

These kids will have grown up free of smoke and will not start smoking themselves afterwards, decreasing the number of cancer diagnosis in the very near future.

> *More information:* <https://www.kwf.nl/en/english>



LILT Milano Monza Brianza APS (Italy)

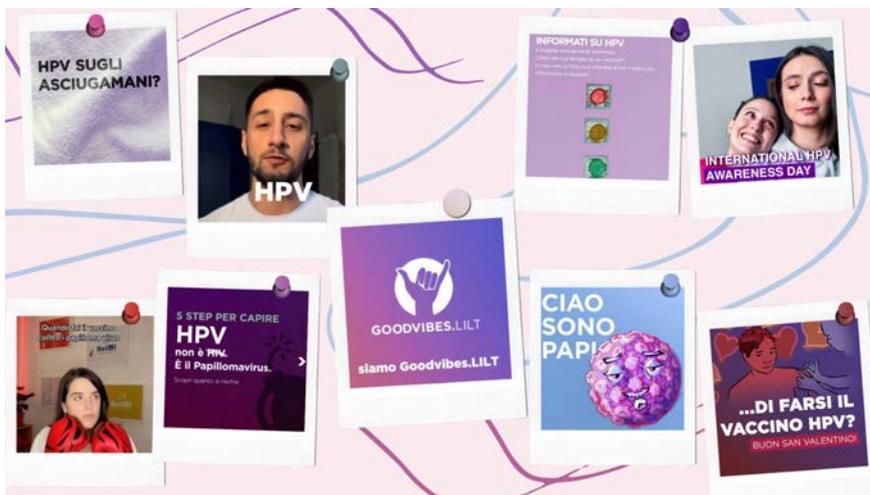
GOOD VIBES IN FIFTY SHADES OF PREVENTION

Fifty Shades of Prevention (FSP) and Goodvibes aim to raise awareness of health issues and HPV among adolescents. Launched during the pandemic, they are based on an informational-cognitive and socio-affective educational approach.

Goodvibes is the first Instagram page by an oncological institution to address many teenagers' concerns in order to gain trust and raise interest. From relationships to gender matters, from school homework to environment, Goodvibes also covers HPV vaccination, STDs, smoking, healthy eating and early diagnosis. FSP involves classroom work, teacher training and parents' guidance to make informed decisions on HPV vaccination.

Engage Minds Hub Research Centre validated indicators to monitor engagement/impact. Results show young people's awareness can be raised when teachers are trained alongside students. Awareness about health can be spread thorough peers and social media to create stronger environments for health and community action and to re-orient social media.

> *More information:* <https://www.legatumori.mi.it/resta-informato-post/news/50-sfumature-di-prevenzione-un-anno-dopo/>



SHORTLISTED



INSAMLINGSSTIFTELSEN
CHOICE

Stiftelsen Choice (Sweden)

MEDICAL STUDENTS PREVENT CANCER AND UNHEALTHY LIFESTYLE THROUGH CHOICE EDUCATION PROGRAM AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

We know that preventing cancer is one of the most effective ways of creating a cancer-free future. At least one in three cancer cases could be prevented and the number of cancer deaths could be reduced significantly by choosing a cancer-smart lifestyle.

The Choice foundation works with medical students to reduce cancer risks and to increase young people's knowledge about health to empower them to take control of their health and thereby lead healthier lives. This is done through preventive initiatives in high schools in which the medical students teach the high schoolers how the body functions and how its functions are affected by alcohol, narcotics and tobacco. Most young people know that alcohol, narcotics and tobacco are health hazardous, but few know why they're dangerous and how they can lead to cancer.

For the last decade, our foundation has been promoting healthy lifestyles among children and young people by means of preventive education and lectures about the benefits that come from avoiding tobacco use, drug use and reducing alcohol consumption. Our educational programme helps young people to understand the impact lifestyles have on their health.

> *More information:* <https://www.stiftelsenchoice.se/?lang=en>





Cancer Prevention

Educational Institutions category



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FIRST PRIZE WINNER

Università degli Studi di Trieste
(Italy)

WEBSITE: <https://www.units.it/en>

**CURIoSA – ComUnicaRe per
crescere In SALute / Communicate
to grow up healthy**





Università degli Studi di Trieste

Initiative

Consuming false health information can cause harm to the individual and society. CURloSA aims to develop innovative communication tools to transfer knowledge on risk factors for cancer and cardiovascular diseases to young individuals, using evidence-based, scientifically verified information. Six main topics were identified: Human Papilloma Virus, smoking, alcohol, sport, nutrition and genetics.

For each topic, we created a “discussion game”, which was played either in person or by Zoom and Google Jamboard, depending on COVID-19 restrictions. In small groups, participants discussed possible interventions to promote a healthy lifestyle and then discussed their choices with experts. An illustrator was involved to design a comic strip summarising the main concepts of the games. In parallel, a cycle of interactive meetings entitled “Science & The City Young” was organised,

both in person and in live streaming. A professional visualthinker took part to represent the concepts discussed at each event in images. The project involved an interdisciplinary group of professional figures including physicians, professors, biologists, oral pathologists, scientific disseminators, scientific communication experts, project managers and graphic designers. The format is innovative, designed for middle- and high- school students, provides scientifically accurate health information and is also suitable for online settings and international adaptation.

CURloSA is a science dissemination initiative funded by the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, developed in partnership between the University of Trieste and the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, in collaboration with SISSA Medialab and Immaginario Scientifico Science Centre.

SECOND PRIZE WINNER

Secondary School of Bolesław Chrobry in Gniezno (Poland)

WEBSITE: <https://www.facebook.com/Mam-Haka-Na-Raka-l-LO-w-Gnieźnie-1001366526552555/?fref=ts>

Mam haka na raka / Cancer conquered





Secondary School of Bolesław Chrobry in Gniezno Initiative

Many activities take place in High School No. 1 to help positively shape the local youth. It is especially pleasing that students themselves initiate various pro-health actions. By participating in various projects, students absorb new messages and gain a lot of skills and experience. They often overcome their weaknesses, knowing that it will pay off in the future.

One of the projects that has been implemented in our school for years is the "Mam haka na raka" project ("Cancer conquered"). Its main goal is to spread cancer prevention and promote a healthy lifestyle. Each year, students select the leading tumour that appears in the action logo. In 2020, it was a skin cancer - melanoma, which is increasingly affecting society, as the development of the cancer is often asymptomatic. We make sure that the project reaches the largest possible part of the local society in diverse ways, by creating films, leaflets and posters popularising the topic of cancer.

We realise that the attitude of a healthy lifestyle must be learned and it is best to learn it as early as possible, which is why we conduct classes in kindergartens, not only in Gniezno. Preschoolers willingly

participate in games we prepare. We provide important information in the form of games so that it remains in their memory for a long time. We do not forget about sports or physical activities, which also affect our well-being.

We conduct classes in primary schools where we adapt the lesson to the level of the class. We are aware that we remember best the information that we discover ourselves or we actively participate in discovering, so we make sure that each student performs the tasks entrusted to him in a group or on his or her own. We leave a mark in schools by handing out leaflets and posters to spread the idea of the project, also among the families of the participants. And we always take a commemorative group photo.

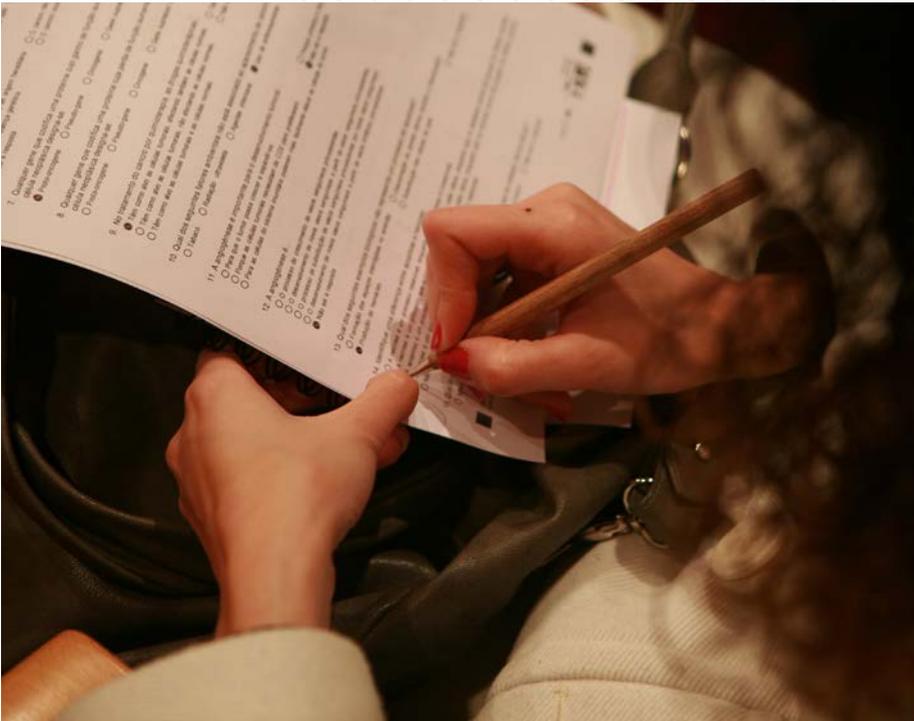
High school students participate in classes in which they learn about cancer prevention. They prepare materials about one cancer of their choice, presenting it to the students of junior high schools. We pay attention to the seriousness of the problem, urging students to promote the topic among their families and local environment.

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

Instituto Piaget (Portugal)

WEBSITE: <https://ipiaget.org/>

Give a Stage to Health





**INSTITUTO
PIAGET**

Instituto Piaget Initiative

This project uses the Forum-theater (FT) technique as a social transformation methodology to increase the cancer literacy (CL) of primary and secondary school students in the municipality of Almada (Portugal).

We focused this initiative on a school community with a high percentage of “problematic” students and low socioeconomic status families. The project uses FT to develop, together with CL, cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Students recognise how the lack of knowledge makes them “oppressed”, and consequently the importance of literacy and prevention in health. “Give a Stage to Health” is intended to increase students’ overall health literacy as well as the social and emotional skills needed to promote sustained change in their lives.

The team previously developed research and validated a tool to assess the impact of educational initiatives on students’ knowledge and perceptions about cancer (SKPaC). It became apparent that to improve the cancer literacy of students, their cognitive, social, and emotional

skills also needed to be stimulated. The solution was to innovatively use the FT technique, known for its efficiency in changing behavior and giving a voice to the participants.

The FT is used to manage conflicts and to identify and combat oppression. In this case, the “oppression” is the low levels of CL that makes it difficult for individuals to manage their health.. “Student-Actors” learn to 1) think creatively and critically; and 2) argue and communicate, regardless of their differences. Thus, they develop their voice, and debate ideas and action strategies of cancer prevention in a safe environment. During the presentation of the play, the audience is asked to participate in helping to eradicate oppression (the methodology both changes the actors and improves the audience’s cancer literacy).

“Give a Stage to Health” is a bold initiative for cancer prevention. The added value of the FT approach is to foster artistic activities, always attractive to young people, while giving the opportunity of the “actors-audience” community to create a new narrative on cancer prevention.

SHORTLISTED



School of Tourism, Catering and Trade, Pula (Croatia)

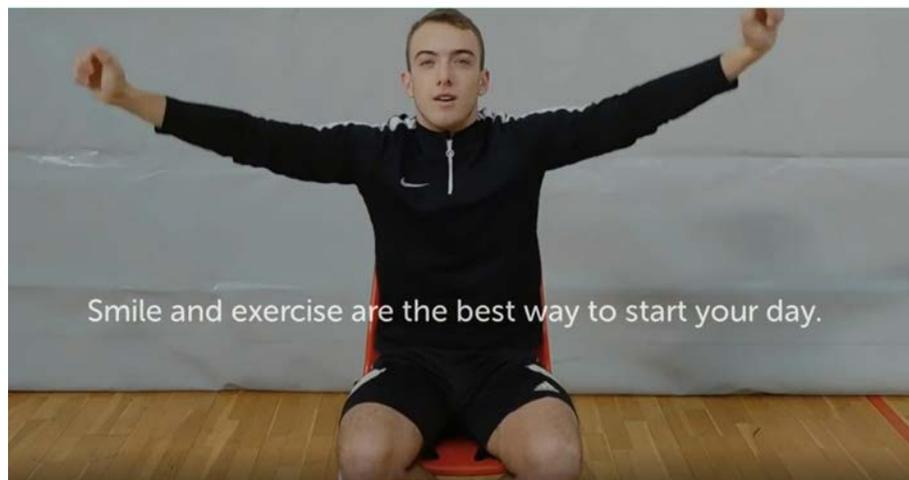
I'M A YOUNG TREE / JA SAM MLADO DRVO

The initiative contributes to improving health literacy on cancer prevention among children and young people and includes clear, realistic and measurable performance indicators. The initiative's activities encourage functional health literacy, which is the basic knowledge and skills for effective functioning and coping in a healthy environment.

The importance of physical activity is stressed through P.E. subjects, students learn workouts that help them grow and develop. Cooking activities include promoting healthy food choices (a healthy version of a fast-food snack) that are also affordable to vulnerable groups. Health education is a cross-curricular topic taught through all subjects. Through collaboration and brainstorming, teachers raise awareness of healthy choices as alternatives to various types of addictions.

The goal of the initiative is for participants to reach the level of interactive health literacy, i.e., advanced knowledge and skills, which allow them to take part in health activities and to understand various forms of health information and their application in the surrounding environment.

> *More information:* <http://ss-tur-ugo-trg-pu.skole.hr/>



Secondary School in Marusevec (Croatia)

PREVENT AND BE HAPPY

The school initiative “Prevent and be happy” has several goals. The first goal is to educate and motivate students to share their knowledge and actively participate in public through different health initiatives. The second goal is to engage the public in city streets through different interactive and creative activities to inform and motivate them to take care of their health, adopt good habits and take steps in preventing different chronic and terminal diseases such as cancer. This initiative is planned and conducted by the teachers and students from the school.

One of the values of the school transmitted through high school education is to encourage students to be active and positive participants in society by setting a good example and sharing the acquired knowledge to motivate and help fellow citizens to make good lifestyle decisions.

> *More information:* <http://www.ss-marusevec.hr/>



SHORTLISTED



6th Primary School Varaždin (Croatia)

HEALTHY WEEK

6th Primary School Varaždin has 795 pupils and a motivated staff of 99, including teachers, expert associates, and technical staff. Our school is certified as both an Eco- and a Non-violent school, and has an innovative curriculum with cultural, ecological and humanitarian activities as well as purely scholastic ones. Events like Healthy Week showcase pupils' knowledge and involve parents.

We strive to integrate children with special needs. During "Healthy Week", we encourage all students to independently prepare healthy meals, exercise daily and do useful chores. At the end of the week, we announce those who performed best. Students learn about healthy diets and how to prepare, serve and eat food respectfully. They also learn how to read labels, among other things.

These activities contribute to cancer prevention, which starts with healthy diet and exercising. Many students have changed their eating habits and make use of our large outdoor schoolyard every break, weather-permitting.

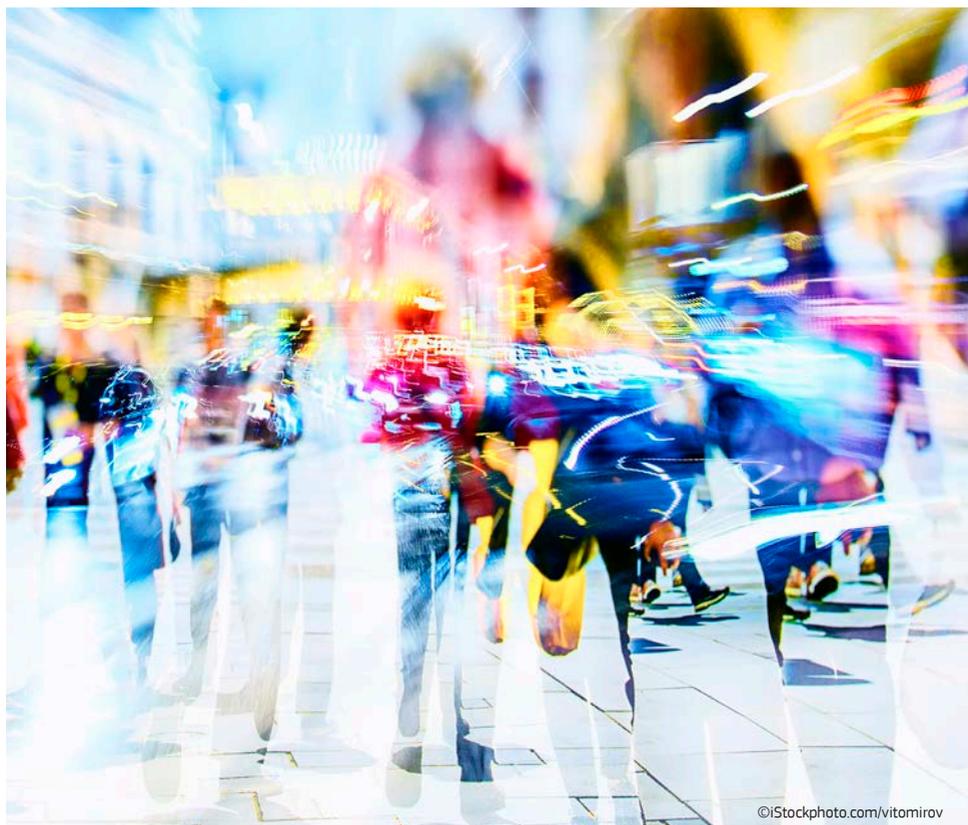
> *More information:* <http://ss-tur-ugo-trg-pu.skole.hr/>





Mental Health

Local authorities or affiliated organisations category



Azienda sanitaria ligure 2

Initiative

The “Care of territorial health services in the Covid-19 pandemic” initiative is a community-based programme, coordinated by the Community Centre of Asl 2, in the Ligurian Region. Community centers are socio-health facilities that respond to the various needs of the family and that promote the health of the population with particular attention to the reduction of territorial and social inequalities.

Our initiative promotes mental health, which is closely connected to physical health. Situations of isolation and concern linked to Covid can compromise the psychological well-being of women in vulnerable times of their lives, such as pregnancy and the puerperium.

The initiative summarises the diversified interventions implemented in the counseling centers for women and families, and carried out with the collaboration of other agencies present in the area in social and health integration:

1. Home visiting and support of people who are discharged from care but still Covid positive, by a multidisciplinary team.
2. Identification and treatment through brief psychological support of women at

psychosocial risk during pregnancy and in the post-natal period both in person and online.

3. Identification and home educational support for brief interventions for vulnerable women living with minors. Also, family fund resources for longer-term support interventions through a psychologist or educator have been activated.

The following objectives were accomplished:

1. risk of perinatal depression in pregnant women and mothers was diminished;
2. assistance and continuity of care in mothers postpartum and in quarantine was guaranteed to asymptomatic Covid-positive women who were separated from their babies, in close collaboration with the Birth Center;
3. homecare has been implemented to ensure the care of families in fragile situations.

We saw the greatest potential of this initiative in the multidimensional assessment of the complex needs of patients and in having a global system, in connection with the social and educational network, of actions with potential and different ways of entry into the family system.

SECOND PRIZE WINNER

Councillor of Healthcare, Aging and Care – Barcelona (Spain)

WEBSITE: <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/sanitatisalut/es>

The Suicide Prevention hotline



**TELÈFON
DE PREVENCIÓ
DEL SUÏCIDI**

900 925 555

Si et trobes en una
situació difícil, truca'ns.
Parlar pot salvar vides.

barcelona.cat/prevencionsuicidi

**taula
salut
mental**

 Fundació Ajuda i Esperança

Ajuntament de
Barcelona 



Councillor of Healthcare, Aging and Care - Barcelona Initiative

The suicide prevention hotline is a key part of the suicide prevention strategy, together with a support point organised by two entities of the city (Associació Catalana per a la Prevenció del Suïcidi (ACPS) and Després del Suïcidi – Associació de Supervivents (DSAS). These organisations accompany the people who are in the immediate vicinity of someone who has suicidal thoughts or who has died by committing suicide. The phone line is coordinated together with the Ajuda i Esperança Foundation.

This strategy is part of the Mental Health Shock Plan 2020 that has been developed with the collaboration and approval of entities and organisations from the city that make up the Barcelona Mental Health Board.

The suicide prevention hotline is a tool accessible for everyone and creates a space for those who have suicidal ideas or intentions. The difficulties that each person and household was living through, especially during confinement and isolation due to the measures around the COVID19 pandemic, led City Hall to create

this phone line so that people could have a way of reaching out. In order to create this initiative and maintain it, we aligned with the Ajuda i Esperança Foundation, which coordinated a hundred volunteers and trained them to be active listeners and to guide people with suicidal thoughts. In the 19 months since its launch, we have received a total of 6.119 calls.

This hotline, which is operative 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, is manned by a selected group of volunteers, trained specifically to answer suicidal calls. The protocol is to assess the risk, and to provide emotional support without judging or trying to convince anyone of anything, showing interest in the needs and suffering of the caller. In high-risk and ongoing suicide cases, the protocol sets out the steps to contact and activate the appropriate emergency services. This telephone service has an Advisory Board that guides and develops protocols on aspects related to good practice, the training of volunteers, content, procedures and intervention, and legal aspects, among others.

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

Intercommunale de Soins Spécialisés de Liège (Belgium)

WEBSITE: <http://licorne.isosl.be>

**Psychosocial support system
for caregivers at the Psychiatric
Hospital following the COVID crisis**



Intercommunale de Soins Spécialisés de Liège Initiative

In 2020, CITES designed a psychosocial support system for caregivers at the Psychiatric Hospital following the COVID crisis. We met with 11 departments, including nurses, paramedics, psychologists, the head nurse and the department doctor.

Each service was asked about the strategies put in place during the crisis that helped it succeed in doing its job. By creating a space for dialogue, CITES aimed to highlight the creativity, skills and resources mobilised by the teams in adversity, but also to recognise the real work, the intelligence and know-how put to work in new ways despite the health risks for them and for their patients.

We hypothesised that this recognition of the collaborative practices used during the crisis would have an impact in terms of mental resilience, individually and collectively, and would promote listening and solidarity between colleagues.

During the intervention, the caregivers expressed their interest in being able to

talk about their work. How much they felt supported, heard and recognised for the efforts they made both specifically during the crisis and every day was assessed at the end of the intervention.

This is being extended into 2022, with 4 working groups set up per service to work on the themes that emerged during the timespan of the previous system. We thus hope to implement sustainable spaces for dialogue and deliberation, places of reflection on work, on the identity of the caregiver, the culture of care, etc.

The originality of this initiative is that it explores how a team works outside the usual norms, how a team invents and introduces concepts from the psychodynamics of work (DEJOURS) such as prescribed/real work and ethical suffering, with the aim of enriching experiences and helping caregivers to creatively “think” the work. It is aimed at all audiences and all sectors.

SHORTLISTED



City of Gent (Belgium)

MOBILE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH WORKERS

Promoting mental health is a key pillar of Ghent's health policy. The COVID-19 pandemic increased challenges in mental health, especially in vulnerable neighbourhoods.

That's why Ghent invested in additional mobile mental health community workers to create a support base for people with mental health problems in three vulnerable neighbourhoods. By proactively looking for citizens who otherwise remain under the radar of care providers, by building neighbourhood networks and strengthening referral systems on mental health, mobile mental health workers support people and front-line organisations, strengthen social inclusion, and fight mental health stigma.

> [More information: https://stad.gent/en](https://stad.gent/en)



SHORTLISTED



Municipality of Metamorfosi (Greece)

PREVENTION OF DEPRESSION AND LONELINESS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE DURING COVID 19

The Covid-19 pandemic caused unprecedented situations for all and led to repeated lockdowns. In order to mitigate the negative effects of the pandemic on the elderly the Municipality of Metamorphosis:

- Created a network of regular telephone communication with older people for the recording of their needs and concerns.
- The programme “Help at Home” was strengthened and its action extended to elderly lonely people who needed help during the lockdown period.
- A collaboration between the City of Metamorfosis and civil society organisations launched a “Friendship at all ages” programme.

> *More information:* <https://www.metamorfossi.gov.gr/>



Municipality of Toulouse (France)

SURICATE ACTION

Concerned about the growth of mental health problems of young people in Toulouse, due to the pandemic, the city of Toulouse wished to develop an innovative prevention system.

The objectives are threefold:

- Raise awareness of mental health issues among young people and fight against misconceptions;
- Offer a listening space in order to speak openly and to participate in well-being;
- Refer identified cases of psychological suffering to the mental health care and care facilities available on the territory.

The city of Toulouse relied on a network of a dozen associative actors to develop a system of prevention and information on mental health by peers based on reaching out to young people in their places of community life or where they gather socially. Young civic service workers, health relay students, university-resident students and young volunteers from the Toulouse Student Life Council have been trained and are involved in the design of the programme and in the creation of tools and interventions on the ground. The scheme has been integrated into the local network of mental health and youth policies.

> *More information:* <https://www.toulouse.fr/>





Mental Health

NGOs or other not-for-profit organisations category



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FIRST PRIZE WINNER

Rio Neiva - Environmental NGO (Portugal)

WEBSITE: <https://rioneiva.com/>

Green Hour - nature-based activities for an active ageing





Rio Neiva - Environmental NGO Initiative

The Green Hour project was specifically designed to alleviate the mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, namely the increased isolation and anxiety, by implementing and fostering regular nature-based activities targeting vulnerable senior population groups living in Esposende, Portugal (i.e. those with reduced mobility, dementia, Alzheimer's, impaired vision, etc.). The project was designed to take advantage of the rich natural surroundings, namely the Northern Litoral Natural Park and the Natura 2000 area.

This initiative was implemented in 2021 by a community-level environmental NGO,

in partnership with several local social charities. All activities were offered at no cost to all participants.

A total of 282 participating seniors were actively engaged, with about 120 seniors participating per week on average. This represents a total of an additional 2049 hours spent out in nature, which substantially increased their level of well-being, social interaction and fine motor skills, while reducing feelings of depression and isolation. The initiative also helped alleviate the strain that social charities experienced due to COVID-19, which placed an additional burden on their resources.

FIRST PRIZE WINNER

Geniko Nosokomeio Papageorgiou,
1st Psychiatric Clinic, Aristotle
University of Thessaloniki (Greece)

WEBSITE: <http://www.adepsychauth.gr/recover/>

Re-Cov-Er - Resilience in the COVID-era





Geniko Nosokomeio Papageorgiou, 1st Psychiatric Clinic, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki **Initiative**

Mental healthcare delivery changed dramatically during the pandemic. The 1st Department of Psychiatry AUTH at the General Hospital Papageorgiou was the only psychiatric department in a general hospital in Thessaloniki to continue to provide both inpatient and outpatient care for mental disorders throughout the pandemic. Multidisciplinary teams were recruited from the staff to design and implement short interventions tailored to the following groups:

a. Psychiatric patients

Phone consultations and e-prescriptions were favoured. All inpatients received a COVID-19 psycho-educational session focused on safety awareness and coping skills to help prevent relapse. Communication with relatives and friends was maintained throughout hospitalisation. Together with the stakeholder “Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region”, a special “Gardens with Stones” activity was organised.

b. COVID-19 patients and their relatives

Both in-person visits and individual psychological support sessions by phone or tablet were held, and bereavement support groups were set up to help family members who lost a loved one.

c. Healthcare Professionals

Three 2-hour resilience training sessions were offered in person and virtually to nearly 150 participants, focusing on topics like interacting with professionals, self-awareness, accepting personal limitations and communication skills.

d. High vulnerability patients

Patients with chronic diseases received psychological support remotely and older adults participated in a psychoeducational platform concerning memory deficits. A screening tool was also developed to identify memory loss and depression, and a children's guide to COVID-19 was developed to promote safe behavior.

SECOND PRIZE WINNER

AFYA - Verein zur interkulturellen Gesundheitsförderung (Austria)

WEBSITE: <https://www.afya.at/gesundheitskreise.php>

Strengthening mental health in crisis





AFYA – Verein zur interkulturellen Gesundheitsförderung Initiative

The “strengthening mental health in crisis” project responds to largely unmet mental health needs of refugees in Austria. Psychosocial problems due to posttraumatic stress disorder and/or postmigration stressors were already high prior to Covid-19 and deteriorated since.

The provision of “health circles” (N=69) in participants’ native languages enabled mental health support for more than 300 refugee women between March 2020 and March 2022, many of them marginalised, without access to any other support.

Each group met online for two months, via two-hour weekly video calls. Subjects addressed in the “health circle” included coping strategies for stress, grief and crisis, relaxation techniques, sleep hygiene, Covid measures, domestic violence, parenting, etc. Each session was composed of thematic input, exchange of experiences and practical exercises.

“Mental health promoters” reach out to their respective communities through personal and professional networks as well as social media. Mental health experts provide guidance and support to the team.

A real-time evaluation of the intervention describes how a salutogenic approach (focusing on wellness rather than illness) benefits participants. Psycho-education and socio-emotional competencies are expected to reduce the risk for long-term effects of PTSD. With the improvement of interpersonal health determinants of women/mothers, we can assume a positive effect on their children. Using lay health promoters below the therapeutic/clinical level, makes this low-level intervention a cost-effective solution to a growing problem.

SECOND PRIZE WINNER

ANEPF - Association Nationale des Étudiants en Pharmacie de France (France)

WEBSITE: <https://anepf.org/>

ANEPF's solidarity towards the mental health and precariousness of French pharmacy students





ANEPF – Association Nationale des Étudiants en Pharmacie de France

Initiative

In 2019, ANEPF conducted its first study on the well-being of French pharmacy students. Results then were worrying – isolation, school dropout, self harm and insecurities – but things were made even worse by the pandemic. ANEPF therefore set up a second survey on the well-being of students, in collaboration with the local student elects and local associations, which was conducted from 17 January to 9 February 2021.

Some 2 978 students answered questions about their mental health, studies, insecurity, access to care and internships, and as expected, their answers reflected increased anxiety. Faced with the alarming results of the students' sense of precariousness shown in ANEPF's previous surveys, as well as its amplification by the current crisis, ANEPF decided to act by creating the "timely emergency aid" to financially support students in distress. So

far, 475 pharmacy students have received this aid.

The system consists of two steps: anonymisation of the applications by a first committee of volunteers from the association, then allocation by a second committee. A total of 100 000 euros have been gathered by partners and 73 000 euros have been donated so far. ANEPF also organised a well-being week and many students joined and gave positive feedback. Students were also trained on how to manage stress and how to set up a social project. We do not intend to stop fighting student insecurities and improving the well-being of pharmacy students. That is why ANEPF launched a second session of punctual emergency aid in September 2021. We intend to make it a sustainable solution for students.

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

APAP - Associazione per lo studio della Psicologia Analitica e della Psicoterapia a orientamento junghiano (Italy)

WEBSITE: http://www.ipap-jung.eu/?page_id=6828

Psychological assistance in primary care to counteract the psychosocial effects of the COVID-19 emergency: support to individuals, families, caregivers, and communities of help



APAP – Associazione per lo studio della Psicologia Analitica e della Psicoterapia a orientamento junghiano

Initiative

The Association for the Study of Analytical Psychology and Jungian-oriented Psychotherapy, in synergy with the Local Health Authority ASL TO4 and in the framework of their Clinical-Psychological Center of Primary Care IPAP-ASL TO4 (Ivrea, Italy), promotes the project Psychological Assistance in Primary Care to Counteract the Psychosocial Effects of the COVID-19 Emergency: Support to Individuals, Families, Caregivers, and Communities of Help. The initiative was launched in April 2020, in response to the Call for Proposals “Together Everything will be Fine” of the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation and with the support of the Charity Fund and Social and Cultural Works of Intesa Sanpaolo.

Implementing the ASL TO4 psychological team for emergencies, the project supports the categories most at risk: COVID-19 patients; family members and caregivers of COVID-19 patients; health care personnel engaged in pandemic management; and the broader population indirectly affected by the pandemic. It provides the opportunity to access the

service free of charge and even remotely, in order to meet the needs of the weakest population segments who are potentially more exposed to the consequences of the pandemic, such as social and geographical isolation, economic fragility, and physical or psychological difficulty in addressing the community health services.

The project represents an innovative pilot intervention, on a territorial basis, oriented both to clinical assistance in emergency situations and to the scientific and organisational development of models and skills for an immediate, effective, multi-professional, and self-empowering response to a global crisis.

Special attention is given to the supervision and training of young psychologists specialising in psychotherapy, regarding brief psychological interventions in crisis and emergency settings; the empirical evaluation of user satisfaction and clinical outcomes and the development of a virtual library related to psychological interventions in the context of SARS emergencies (2002-2022).

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

Merimna - Society for the Care of Children and Families Facing Illness and Death (Greece)

WEBSITE: <https://merimna.org.gr/?lang=en>

"Connections": Supporting the school community in the shadow of the pandemic



Merimna - Society for the Care of Children and Families Facing Illness and Death Initiative

"Connections" is a distance training programme which aims to empower primary and secondary educators across Greece on how to effectively support students who encounter the life-threatening illness and/or death of a loved person during the pandemic, and facilitate their adjustment to loss.

Research evidence suggests that restrictions imposed during the pandemic have increased the risk of long-term mental health problems for those bereaved from COVID-19 or other causes. Recent studies predict a heightened prevalence of severe and disabling grief, known as 'prolonged grief disorder'. This may particularly affect children who are not prepared for the death of a loved one and are deprived of opportunities to share good-byes due to visiting restrictions. Isolated from their peers, they often experience increased distress and loneliness and are left alone to make sense of a harsh reality. Behaviors such as overuse of the computer, insomnia and eating disorders are common symptoms of depression among children with increased vulnerability. Some may find it difficult to

share their suffering, especially when they do not participate in funeral and memorial rituals, whereas others are deprived of the support of their parent who is often overburdened, emotionally exhausted, and lacks the support of a familiar network. The support provided by educators, under such circumstances, may be critical to the family's well-being.

"Connections" adopts a blended learning approach, where asynchronous and real-time online learning are combined, ensuring participants' engagement and retention. The training is divided into two parts: childhood support (a) through the course of a life-threatening illness and (b) through bereavement. Educators access the online audiovisual material for each topic, in their own time, on the educational platform (www.learn.merimna.org.gr), and then they participate in a 3-hour online meeting with Merimna's grief counselors, during which they discuss (in a plenary format or smaller groups) selected topics, questions and cases. Each training cycle lasts 20 days and it is attended by 150 educators.

ESWA - European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (The Netherlands)

SEX WORK AND MENTAL HEALTH

ESWA is a sex worker-led network, representing more than 90 organisations in 29 countries. It aims to ensure that sex worker voices are heard and to protect their rights.

Sex workers are at high risk of violence and human rights violations, and the COVID-19 crisis dramatically magnified things.

European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA) members reported that many sex workers and activists felt depressed and suicidal and responded by developing the 'Sex work and mental health' programme, funded by ILGA Europe.

The programme provided support and built capacity, engaged in advocacy and promoted inclusion. As part of this project, a briefing paper, "Overview of factors impacting sex workers' mental health and access to services in Europe and Central Asia", was published in four languages and the "Supporting mental health and well-being in our communities: tool kit for sex workers' rights activists" was produced. Awareness campaigns were also launched on social media and on the ESWA website.

> [More information: https://www.eswalliance.org/mental_health_programme](https://www.eswalliance.org/mental_health_programme)



Fogjunk Össze az Egészségügyért Alapítvány (Hungary)

MENTAL VACCINATION

Established in April 2021, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, the initial aim of our foundation was to create a platform to support healthcare workers by coordinating donations – of money, food, and various services – which were given to them by individuals and organisations.

As larger donations started to flow in, the activities of the Foundation became more complex – for example, we gave awards to the best Covid workers and Covid teams. When the pandemic started to recede, we focused more and more on the post-Covid recovery of healthcare workers and their families. We organised a complex programme which involved mental health support as well as recreational opportunities including weekends in hotels, cultural programmes and coffee & book events.

Our mental health support programme, entitled ‘Mental Vaccination,’ involved lectures and workshops to help healthcare workers cope with post-Covid mental health issues. The lectures – held by psychologists and other mental-health professionals – tackled such issues as burnout, trauma, mental immunity and work-life balance, while the workshops were aimed at discussing good practices and methods to apply theoretical knowledge in practice.

> *More information:* <https://fogjunkossze.hu/>



FIMABIS-IBIMA - Fundación Pública para la Investigación de Málaga en Biomedicina y Salud. Instituto de Investigación Biomédica de Málaga (Spain)

TELEHEALTH HOME SUPPORT DURING COVID-19 CONFINEMENT FOR COMMUNITY-DWELLING OLDER ADULTS WITH MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT OR MILD DEMENTIA

The initiative sought to prevent and alleviate mental-health related needs and the impact of social isolation as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic in community-dwelling older adults with cognitive impairment or dementia by providing television-based and telephone-based health care and social support bridging the gaps which arose from disrupted service provision. Moreover, the effects of a television-based assistive integrated technology TV-ASSISTDEM for remote support were explored.

Findings showed how a presumably vulnerable population presented more resilience to social isolation than expected with overall optimal mental health. However, living alone was reported as a risk factor for negative psychological effects. Health or social services contact during the outbreak was high, and television sets were the preferred technological devices to access COVID-19 information, to enjoy recreational activity, and to perform memory exercises as an intellectual activity. Telehealth support using TV-AssistDem demonstrated potential for cognitive stimulation.

> [More information: http://www.tvassistdem-aal.eu/](http://www.tvassistdem-aal.eu/)



Solentra 'Trauma en Solidariteit' vzw (Belgium)

FREE HELPLINE FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN TIMES OF COVID-19

The corona pandemic hit refugees extra hard. They were confronted with extra stress, panic attacks and psychosocial problems, on top of the already existing problems of trauma or depression. Moreover, during the lockdowns it was more difficult to mobilise stakeholders to identify and formulate a request for help with the refugees. Therefore Solentra introduced a free psychological helpline in Arabic, Dari and Farsi for refugees during the lockdowns in 2020-2021.

A team of psychologists listened to the refugees' stories, offered psycho-education, techniques and exercises to reduce stress and anxiety, and tried to strengthen the refugees' resilience. The most common complaints were stress, sleep problems, worrying, anxiety, feelings of depression and feelings of powerlessness. Reasons why refugees considered the helpline to be useful were: getting advice and information, peace of mind, feeling hopeful again, regaining more control over feelings and their lives, feeling less alone. The helpline also allowed for early detection of serious problems.

The helpline was promoted through refugee support organisations, reception centres and passing out flyers on the street.

> *More information:* <https://www.solentra.be/en/>



Soleterre Foundation (Italy)

AT THE FOREFRONT – IN PRIMA LINEA

Italy was the first European country affected by the Covid-19 pandemic; Lombardy was the most affected region, and the Policlinico San Matteo at Pavia was one of the main hospitals engaged from the first day, as the referral hospital for the first “red zone” of Codogno (where “patient #1” was treated). Since March 13th 2020, Soleterre developed and improved a clinical psychology service for health professionals, patients and relatives who were impacted by the pandemic. It activated a team of 15 clinical psychologists who provided direct psychological support within the Covid-19 emergency wards.

Together with the Crisis Unit of the Policlinico, a Therapeutic Model for COVID-19 Mental Symptoms was developed, which was implemented and produced observational studies. The intervention model has been progressively adopted on the population of the Lombardy (Bergamo, Milano, Pavia, Lodi) and has allowed the creation of a National Programme that provided free psychological support in all the 20 Italian regions by 90 psychotherapists, assisted 800 adult patients and carried out interventions in over 80 school classes to help 1,700 students and 350 teachers.

> More information: <https://www.psicologisolettere.org/>



Stichting IkkanWelzijn (The Netherlands)

NEIGHBOURS HELP LONELY ELDERLY

Technology has made it easier to meet and connect to people over longer distances, slowly taking people’s attention away from neighbors and local communities. In the smaller towns in the east of the Netherlands, community spirit remained more present than in many other places in the country. Still, we noticed that is hard for people to reach out to their community in times of need. The COVID-19 pandemic made this painfully clear. With the lockdowns, people saw their normal life and social activities disappear. People were confined to their houses and social contact outside of their households diminished.

IkkanWelzijn started a campaign, reaching out to the lonely (elderly). We set up a platform that allowed people to submit their request for help, or to offer their help to those in need. We gathered local societies (such as soccer clubs) and other volunteers. We learned that asking people if they need help is not the way to go, as people find it hard to admit. However, by simply making small-talk, people begin to open up. When COVID-19 restrictions permitted, we organised gatherings that allowed people to meet. In this simple way, we helped people to connect to their local community again, both the lonely elderly, but also the volunteers who helped them.

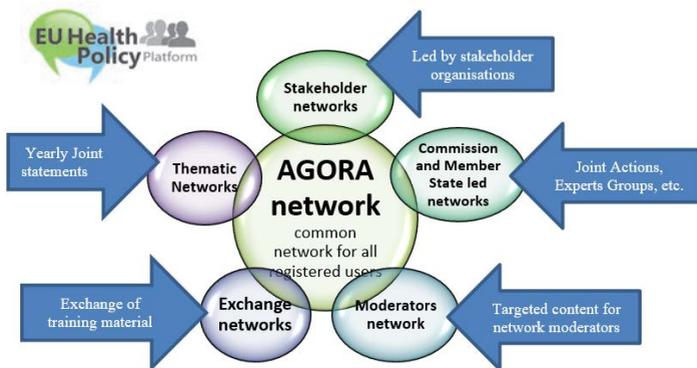
> More information: <http://www.ikwz.nl/>



EU Health Policy Platform

Working closely with health experts and civil society is an essential part of the European Commission's activities for shaping and preparing EU health policies. Created in 2016, the **EU Health Policy Platform** is an operational health stakeholder platform set up and managed by the Commission, which **brings together a considerable number of registered users (nearly 5 000 active participants in over 80 networks led by Commission services, Member State authorities and health stakeholder organisations.** It is open to all health stakeholders who comply with the Platform Rules of Procedure*.

The online Platform has six types of networks covering different user needs:



Registered users benefit from the different online tools available in the Platform such as the library, the online calendar, the **webinars** and the **bi-weekly newsletter**, and **they can use these tools** to develop their position papers, organise and promote their activities, improve their internal management of documents and communication messages, and reduce the need for physical meetings.

Get the latest news on EU health policy, propose topics for upcoming webinars, create your own network and promote your initiatives simply by registering in the Platform! Just follow this link <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/hpf>, use or create your EU login and submit your request to gain access to this valuable resource, the EU Health Policy Platform.

* https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/hpf/assets/documents/Rules of Procedure_EU Health Policy Platform.pdf



EU Health Policy Platform



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European Commission

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