

13-14 September 2017

Basel, Switzerland

6th City Health International Conference



**CITY
HEALTH
2017**
Basel

Conference report

Empowerment, Engagement and Partnership: participating to develop healthy cities

This report, with the presentations, videos and other materials from the conference, posted on the City Health International website, together make up the archive for the **City Health 2017** conference. The website can be found at: cityhealthinternational.org/conferences/archived/2017-archive

The report, prepared by the conference team, is based on conference documents, material from the website and from feedback received from the participants.

The Context

The theme for this sixth City Health conference was ***'Empowerment, Engagement and Partnership: participating to develop healthy cities'***. This reflected the belief that measures and actions for health promotion and urban development are more effective if the affected populations play an active and co-decisive role in the process of design, development and delivery. Engagement and participation contributes to sustainable solutions, to a greater identification with urban public space and increased intergenerational communication.

The Organisers

City Health 2017 was hosted by the [University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland](http://www.univ.ch) and produced by [Knowledge Action Change](http://www.knowledgeactionchange.org)

Sponsors, Partners, Supporters

As well as thanks due to our local hosts for all their efforts, the organisers are grateful to:



The Conference

The conference took place on Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 September 2017, at the University of Basel, Switzerland.

Prior to the formal proceedings there were a number of opportunities for participants to take visit local projects in the city. These include services working with children, older citizens and street homelessness.

The programme for the conference can be viewed at cityhealthinternational.org/programme-2017/presentations-2017

It was designed by a committee comprising representatives of the local hosts, former hosts and other international experts, creating sessions that cut across issues, professions and disciplines, addressing problems and possible solutions in a more 'horizontal' and integrated way.

Through a critical lens the programme examined the increasingly complex relationships between policy makers, academics and researchers, communities and individuals, in a world where change is rapid and information technology has increased access to information, as well as changing the dynamics of communication and influence.

The conference focussed on the role of cities and how they can and should respond to and manage the needs of their communities, to ensure health and well-being are at the centre of policy and planning, in terms of the structures, services and support available. At all times the process informed and underpinned by a thorough examination of the available evidence.

In addition to opening and closing sessions, there were three plenary and twelve parallel sessions. The closing session include the presentation of the Paolo Pertica Award, to Dr Igrid van Beek cityhealthinternational.org/paolo-pertica-award and the Alison Chesney and Eddie Killoran Memorial Lecture, delivered by Madame Ruth Dreifuss cityhealthinternational.org/programme-2017/memorial-lecture. There was also a poster exhibition area and we were pleased to have a demonstration from a mobile drug testing laboratory, which operates in clubs in Berne <https://cityhealthinternational.org/mobile-lab>.

There were sixty-four speakers and chairs, from 11 countries, with some fifty-five percent from Switzerland and others coming from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Luxemburg, Romania and the United Kingdom.

The organisers are grateful to the efforts of the members of the Programme Committee for the conference <https://cityhealthinternational.org/programme-2017/program-committee> lead by Professor Gerry Stimson and Professor Carlo Fabian, for their work in helping shape the conference.

As with previous editions, City Health 2017 was an 'inclusive' conference, with presenters and participants including NGOs, community projects, advocacy groups, as well as urban and health planners, academics, policy makers and those who deliver services and interventions.

Attendance and Feedback

To promote the conference we used our existing networks and databases, together with those of the host organisations, and extended the scope via colleagues within public health generally.

As with previous editions, City Health 2017 was an 'inclusive' conference, with presenters and participants including NGOs, community projects, advocacy groups, as well as urban and health planners, academics, policy makers and those who deliver services and interventions.

One hundred and twenty-one people participated in the conference (from 137 who were registered to attend). They came from **20 different countries**, with fifty-five percent from Switzerland. Other countries of origin included Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iran, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Luxemburg, Moldova, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, UK and Ukraine.

Fifty-four percent of the participants were **women**. **Academics** comprised **55%**, with other sectors represented including practitioners, NGOs, public health policy, consumer advocacy, industry and media.

Completed **feedback forms** were received from **25 participants (21%)¹**. Respondents were asked to rate a number of aspects of the conference programme, organisation and venue (on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent)). In addition other comments were also welcomed.

The opening

Regarding the **programme** there was a good level of satisfaction, with the **opening session** and the **three plenary sessions** all received a **75%** rating of **good/very good/excellent**, from those expressing an opinion.

The **memorial lecture**, delivered by Madame Dreifuss, received a **100%** rating of **good/very good/excellent**.

With a total of twelve on offer, presented in groups of three, each of the **parallel sessions** was attended by only a proportion of the respondents, which may distort the feedback somewhat. The **average rating as good/very good/excellent was 94%** with a **range of between 77%-100%**.

¹ The proportion of respondents is a little lower than the average for previous conferences of 25%

In terms of the **overall organisation** of the event, overall **96%** rated as **good/very good/excellent**.

Conference staff and volunteers received approval ratings of **92%** **good/very good/excellent**.

The **location of the conference** was rated **92%** **good/very good/excellent**. The actual **venue** was rated **88%** **good/very good/excellent**.

Overall the catering received a **92%** **good/very good/excellent** rating, with the **reception** for participants rating **96%**.

Eighty-eight percent thought the networking opportunities at the conference were **good/very good/excellent** and **76%** rated the conference **good/very good/excellent** value for money.

In addition to the ratings, we also asked participants to provide additional comments, should they wish. With regard to the **programme** the best things were:

- ❖ Getting an input in new topics, having possibility to share and discuss.
- ❖ Diversity of topics (5 mentions).
- ❖ International perspectives, interesting topics.
- ❖ Parallel sessions – breadth of issues discussed.
- ❖ ‘Modellvorhaben’ - from Gabriella Muri’s presentation (2 mentions)
- ❖ A lot of interesting presentations, with a lot of different perspectives to health issues.
- ❖ Interdisciplinary perspectives of contributors, many opportunities to exchange ideas.
- ❖ The level of participation in the sessions.

Some critical comments

- ❖ There was little presence of participants from Eastern Europe, majority of presenters were from Western Europe.
- ❖ Lack of workshops/discussion.

More **general comments** included:

- ❖ Opportunity to meet and discuss issues with a range of experts (4 mentions).
- ❖ The exchange of ideas and scientific achievements, as well as meetings with colleagues.
- ❖ The conference was academically interesting, philosophically stimulating and generally inspiring. Concurrently, team members were friendly, chirpy and incredibly helpful.
- ❖ I would have happily attended another day.
- ❖ The organisers (you guys are awesome!)

There were also a number of **suggestions for future conferences** made and these are summarised below:

- ❖ The role of urban planning and design and health-equity in cities in low and middle-income countries.
- ❖ Crises and health, health in resort cities.
- ❖ Practical issues related to the prevention of HIV and tuberculosis among key affected communities and groups in Europe, as well as refugees and migrants from Africa and Asia.
- ❖ Translating research into policy and delivery.
- ❖ Overview of cannabis law changes in USA.
- ❖ Follow-ups on the presented works this year.
- ❖ Drug checking with a high-tech mobile lab as a preventive and harm reduction instrument.

Organisers thank those who have taken the time to contribute their feedback. It is valuable to have it to inform the production of future events, ensuring that they remain relevant to those who attend.

Outputs from the Conference

The conference assembled an impressive combination of academics, policy makers, professionals and advocates to raise awareness of the importance of 'joined-up' thinking and action to address health behaviours in the urban context. The event also provided valuable networking opportunities to further the development of City Health International.

The lasting legacy of the conference is the archive website - <https://cityhealthinternational.org/conferences/archived/2017-archive> - where the programme, presentations, videos, photos and other materials generated by the conference can be accessed in perpetuity by both those who attended and others, making the learning from the event widely available and adding to the growing body of information available from City Health International.

The Future for City Health International

City Health International as an established network, provides opportunities to promote 'joined-up' solutions to urban health and wellbeing, through bringing together different disciplines and professions, along with consumers and advocates, organising debates and discussions, and enabling creative initiatives and projects to be showcased.

The next City Health conference will be held in Odesa, Ukraine, on 13/14 September 2018. The event is hosted by [Alliance for Public Health \(Ukraine\)](#), [AFEW International \(Netherlands\)](#) and the [City of Odesa](#), in association with [Knowledge-Action-Change \(The United Kingdom\)](#). Information about City Health 2018 can be found on the conference website <https://cityhealthinternational.org/2018/>