European Excellence Exchange in Journalism

Public Health Literacy and Community Media in Europe

E³J Report

Based on National Research undertaken in Austria, Denmark, Ireland and Spain



Co-funded by the European Union

Public Health Literacy and Community Media in Europe

Report for E3J*

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*** The European Excellence Exchange in Journalism (E3J)** aims to unleash the combined potential of European values and cross-border collaboration for better journalism and, as a result, a better-informed public. It provides a single-entry point for all types of media organisations, networks and individuals to connect, based on mutual trust and common rules. **Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE) and the Austrian community media training and research organisation COMMIT prepared this report** as a part of our work to include community media in the E3J development process with a focus on Public Health, Media Literacy and Community Media. E3J consortium partners are Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Free Press Unlimited and COPEAM.

Published by COMMIT 2023 - https://www.commit.at

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Co-funded by the European Union

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Executive Summary

This report was carried out within the framework of the project **European Excellence Exchange in Journalism (E3J)**, a partnership among five European Press Freedom organisations. Recognizing that community media in many communities' lives represent a trusted and valuable source of information, this thematic report aims to strengthen and support community media in reflecting and contributing to more public health awareness and debate. The report includes findings from four countries in Europe with different framework conditions for the work of community media, but also for communication culture and health awareness in general.

Community media are a tool of communication for people in hundreds of communities which are run for the community, about the community and by the community. They are recognised by European and International institutions and often referred to as the third media sector, as they serve as a distinct alternative to public national broadcasters and private commercial media.

Public Health is defined by the WHO as "*the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts of society*" (Acheson, 1988; WHO). Public health encompasses much more than the goal of being healthy and refers also to external living conditions such as climate and clean environment, social aspects such as poverty reduction, comprehensive access to the health system for all but also the factual and evidence-based discussion of medical findings and ways to counter disinformation. As such it touches almost all of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The report aims to find answers to the following questions based on research in four countries:

- What are the main challenges for more public health awareness in the involved countries?
- What are the major information gaps in the field of Public Health?
- What is community media's role to inform and engage communities related to Public Health?
- What examples of good practise based on media and information literacy can be found to promote public health awareness?

Findings:

- When it comes to public health issues, there is a great need for more trustworthy information, social awareness and space for debate – this is true for all countries studied.
- Concern was found as to the inequal levels of health literacy in society, often closely linked to uneven levels of science literacy and in media and information literacy, but also dependent on available resources and social position in society.

- Community Media are relevant spaces for local or regional communication, trusted by the communities. This potential often cannot be fully developed due to limited resources. This fact prevents Community Media often to play an even more powerful role in informing communities about public health issues and to become stronger health literacy platforms.
- Community media are giving a voice to those segments of the communities with less opportunities to bring up their issues in mainstream media. By ensuring access for people with a wide fan of public health challenges and to take part in public debate about their health issues carries a high potential for raising awareness on public health and for encouraging more civic participation.

Recommendations:

Community media can become key actors for health promotion and empowering people to increase their control over and improve their health. They are by their design and structure an important link between public health guidance and the community. Community media are acting locally and use horizontal structures of production. They allow people to create their own means of cultural expression, news, information and dialogue. Concrete actions should include:

- The production of live, magazine-format programmes, dealing with public health in all its variety and diversity should be based on involvement of or interviews with experts and 'experts on consequences' who live with the challenges.
- Involving and cooperating with medical, psychological, and social professionals in general could also open the way for new partnerships with connected or responsible institutions. This should include engagement with local associations, networks, action groups or the like to do portraits of these groupings to ease community engagement.
- The production of human-interest stories, personal portraits, where people who have gone through a health challenge describe it, talk about ways of living with it and the path to recovery can serve as good practise.
- Community Media should not limit their activities to programmes but also carry out community mobilisation and information-sharing events, workshops or other interventions in public spaces, physically, on-site.
- The production of short science information programmes, e.g. five minutes at a certain time every day, could be a helpful and effective form of public service announcements which might be realised also in different languages.

Part One

Public Health Literacy and Community Media in Europe

1. Research Design

COMMIT and CMFE (C&C) collaborate on implementing *'A media and information literacy Approach for Civic Empowerment in Public Health'* within a 2-year project with partners RSF, FPU, and CoPeAM: E3J - European Excellence Exchange in Journalism. Based on mutual trust and common rules, this project will seek to streamline collaboration between European Press Freedom organisations. A part of this work will be to explore 'topical excellence' in work around the main challenges of our times - migration, climate and public health. C&C focuses within this framework on 'A media and information literacy Approach for Civic Empowerment in Public Health'. The present study is the first step in this work.

1.1 Context

Public health as a topical strand addresses the discussion on health issues in a wide and holistic way. This encompasses much more than the goal of being healthy and refers to external living conditions such as climate and clean environment, social aspects such as poverty reduction, comprehensive access to the health system for all but also the factual and evidence-based discussion of medical findings and ways to counter disinformation. As such it touches almost all the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and as WHO underlines: "Public health is ultimately a political choice."

With the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and the fight against it, the topic of public health has once again gained in importance. The comprehensibility of political decisions - up to and including the temporary curtailment of freedoms - was closely linked to the level of information of citizens and the weighing of which measures can be acceptable to society as a whole.

The important role of trustworthy media and journalism as a source of credible information became clear again in the context of Covid 19. While on the one hand

the use of trustworthy media increased, the extent and preparation of disinformation also increased vehemently. The discussion and teaching of media and information literacy (MIL) is an important field of action here, also to counteract social disintegration. Here the relevance of community media for addressing disadvantaged or marginalized citizens in the local environment is highly relevant as it is stressed in the Council of Europe report (2020) “Media Literacy for all”.

1.2 Research objectives and design

To do this work, C&C has engaged researchers in four European countries (Austria, Denmark, Ireland and Spain) to – for their own country – map how community media absorb and reflect an appropriate public health debate, recognizing that community media in many communities’ lives represent a trusted and valuable source of information – thus performing their MIL role. Based on the research community media broadcasters and their audiences from eight grant-winning stations will be invited to exchange workshops in the four countries, to identify how the community media platforms can perform this role even more effectively.

After the exchange workshops, the eight participating stations from the four countries will then use the acquired insight and knowledge to develop a Public Health editorial group at their station (if they don’t already have it) and a programme profile and production. Based on the research, the workshops and the programme development processes, a concluding activity will be to root all of this in a learning resource developed by C&C, which will be available online.

1.3 Definitions and terminology. Country selection and profiles

Within this project, we operate with the following understandings and definitions:

Community media

Community media (CM) are non-for-profit media owned by, run by and staffed by people from within a given community, which produces programmes about the life of the community through involvement by community members. Sometimes stations owned by a religious organisation or even by the state may have most of the traits of a community media station except for the ownership. Such stations are often also referred to as community media, which are most often geographically defined, but can also be run by a community of interest such as by a NGO dedicated to particular interests, or in the advancing digital reality, can be special interest audience-focused podcasts.

Referred to as the “third media sector”, community media have a clearly distinct identity alongside national public service media and private commercial media, and as the Council of Europe states: “In a context where freedom of expression and access to information are increasingly endangered by concentration of

ownership in the media field and by the spread of disinformation, community-run projects, whether online, radio or TV, are indicators of media pluralism."[1]

Media and information Literacy

Media Information Literacy (MIL) is a dynamic concept that evolves over time in response to technological, social, cultural, economic, and political factors. For the purpose of this research Media and information literacy is an interrelated set of competencies that help people to maximize advantages and minimize harm in the new information, digital and communication landscapes.

Media and information literacy covers competencies that enable people to critically and effectively engage with information, other forms of content, the institutions that facilitate information and diverse types of content, and the discerning use of digital technologies. Capacities in these areas are indispensable for all citizens regardless of their ages or backgrounds. This includes being able to critically understand and evaluate media content – wherever it comes from – and understand how media production, editorial and funding processes work. Nowadays that also includes understanding how data is used and how algorithms and AI can influence media production and choices.

Being media literate also means being able to responsibly and safely use digital media services and engage with others in the public sphere, as well as fulfilling the creative and participatory potential that new technologies and services can offer.

Public Health

Public Health (PH) is by the WHO defined as "the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts of society"[2] Activities to strengthen public health capacities and service aim to provide conditions under which people can maintain to be healthy, improve their health and wellbeing, or prevent the deterioration of their health. Public health focuses on the entire spectrum of health and wellbeing, not only the eradication of particular diseases.

Public health encompasses much more than the goal of being healthy and refers to external living conditions such as climate and clean environment, social aspects such as poverty reduction, comprehensive access to the health system for all but also the factual and evidence-based discussion of medical findings and ways to counter disinformation. As such it touches almost all the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and as WHO underlines: "Public health is ultimately a political choice." Researchers have worked to come up with a short, all-encompassing definition, which we like: "Public Health is collective action for sustained population-wide health improvement".

[1] https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/community-media

[2] Acheson, 1988; WHO

Country selection and profiles

E3J aims to cover Europe broadly for the advancement of combined potential of the E3J project. It focuses on strengthening European values and cross-border collaboration for better journalism and, as a result, a better-informed public, through its single-entry point for all types of media organisations, networks and individuals to connect, based on mutual trust and common rules.

In view of the coverage of European countries by the other coalition partners the cooperating partners, CMFE and COMMIT, identified the following countries to be able to provide a broad span of community media realities, of public health debate realities and of ways in which the community media cover public health. The case countries are **Austria, Denmark, Ireland and Spain.**

The four countries are quite different in size and demographic structure. In fact, Austria, Denmark and Ireland can be seen as among the smaller countries in Europe. At the same time Austria and Ireland share the common experience with a large neighbouring country with the same dominant language. This has large effects for the media markets. More relevant for our research is the fact that in all four countries we find colourful and very active landscapes of community media that enable a large number of citizens to create media in a structured and editorial way and provide necessary educational opportunities. Community Media as a specific media sector includes in our report mainly community radio and community TV stations. Community media distribute their programmes in most of the cases via terrestrial broadcasting and all of them are available also on the internet – partly also with on-demand services. Only in fewer cases and when no frequencies are available, they use only internet or cable for distribution.

Austria has a population close to 9 million inhabitants and covers an area of 83,878 km2. Television remains the most significant source of information, and the public service broadcaster has maintained his strong position with his market share of about one-third of the television market. The newspaper market is dominated by few companies and highly concentrated. There are six national language minorities recognised with specific rights also related to media.

Denmark is a small country with around 5.8 million inhabitants and covering an area of 42,925 km2. Danish media is dominated by private newspapers on the one hand and a strong public service the audio-visual media on the other hand. A main characteristic of the Danish media landscape is the government support for Danish media and cultural production which to a large extent is driven by a political will to support and uphold media in Danish language and media plurality.

The Republic of Ireland is a country with about 5 million inhabitants and an area of 70,274 km2. Ireland's Anglophone/former British colony status sees UK-originated media play a significant role in Irish media consumption. But RTE as public service Radio and TV is the most important source of news.

Spain has a population of over 47 million inhabitants and covers an area of 505,944 km2. Media consumption is led by TV followed by radio and only with

much lower rate followed by print media - magazines and press. Castilian is the official language of the state but with the status of autonomous communities Basque, Galician, Valencian and Aranese have strong relevance and are object of special respect and protection.

2. Public Health Discourse

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines Public Health as community action for improved community health. Health is thereby, according to the definition of the WHO, not merely seen as the absence of disease, but also as a subjective well-being, contentment or happiness. It also integrates body, psyche and social dimensions. Public health addresses both responsibilities of society for more health, as well as responsibility from individuals. One of the key aspects is about empowering individuals to take on this responsibility. Another important aspect of Public Health is the shared responsibility for it at all levels of health care like disease prevention, cure and rehabilitation. This is much the same as the consideration of "health in all policies", flashing a recognition and joint effort for having public health reflected in all policy areas like e. g. education, science, transport, environment, social affairs, finance, or security.

WHY is public health communication and health literacy important?

Knowledge and capacities are power. Finding, understanding and using knowledge to sustain and improve individual and public health and welfare is the essence of health literacy[3], and the foundation for equitable progression of the health status of future generations where we leave no one behind[4]. For decades health literacy has been on the global agenda as an important individual capacity and determinant of health. However, more and more international research and political calls for action position health literacy responsiveness of organizations, systems and communities as a crucial contribution to the efforts to achieve equity in health and wellbeing.

HOW is health literacy addressed in WHO?

Notably, the report *Health literacy: the Solid Facts* (2013) from WHO in the European Region acknowledged the importance of health literacy in public health and made a strong case for an integrated approach across different settings and sectors such as cities and communities, workplaces and educational settings, organizations and health care settings as well as in media and public communication.

With the *Shanghai Declaration on promoting health in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2016), health literacy was further highlighted as a pillar

3 The concept of 'health literacy' was first introduced in the Danish Health Authority publication "Health Literacy" in 2009.

4 This section is based on an interview with Dr. Bente Mikkelsen, Director of the Division of noncommunicable Diseases and Promoting Health through the Life-course, WHO Regional Office for Europe, as presented in: "GPS – God praksis I folkesundhed. Sundhedskompetence I et strukturelt perspektiv – En vej til lighed i sundhed?" Danish Health Literacy Network. 2020

in health promotion and an important factor in efforts to improve health equity globally together with the principles of good governance and healthy cities and communities. In this declaration Member States committed themselves to recognize health literacy as a critical determinant of health; develop, implement and monitor inter-sectoral national and local strategies for strengthening health literacy; harness the potential of digital technology; and ensure that consumer environments support healthy choices**.**

In this regard, WHO in the European Region presents a framework for implementation of health literacy initiatives through the life course to guide and support policy-makers and implementers in Member States in the adoption and implementation of national and subnational, evidence-based, stand-alone or integrated policies or strategies on health literacy. All contributions and initiatives aimed at responding to the commitment in the *Shanghai Declaration* in a national or international context are important. In many countries, the potential of integrating health literacy approaches across the health system and beyond is still to be acknowledged and the national needs and resources to be identified.

Making healthy choices and finding the way through complex healthcare systems is becoming an increasingly challenging issue in modern societies. People are bombarded with information and misinformation that can be difficult to navigate and relate to. Consequently, this can have an impact on the health of the individual, the use of health services, inequality in health in the population, and the health economy. Health literacy is a determinant of health and therefore important to focus on and prioritise.

People have a common desire for a healthy life course broadly understood, assessed by most of us as something of the most important. How we collaborate on health helps to characterize us as citizens in a country, as part of a community and as a democracy. This has become particularly evident during COVID-19, where prioritizing people's health has both brought people together and separated them. We know a lot about what is healthy for everyone, but less about how we consider the diversity of the people. As humans, we are complex individuals in relation to life situation, personality, motivation and social relationships.[5]

2.1 Public health challenges identified

Through the four case studies it is found that the public health issues most prominently discussed are quite similar. Under the impression of the recent Covid pandemic, all four country studies highlight socio-psychological health challenges increasing in general and most worrying among children and youths. In all realities studied, a lack of sufficient human resources to meet the increasing needs is reported. Furthermore, the country studies point to issues related to lifestyle, physical exercise and its effects including obesity – again with a focus on

5 http://folkesundhed.dk/

children and youths – and mental health challenges as the most important public health priorities.

In Ireland the Department of Health recently launched a national survey about health behaviours, focusing on a slightly broader fan of public health challenges, namely: smoking, alcohol, antibiotic resistance, General Practitioner utilisation, mental health, social cohesion, weight and suicide. Also the **Danish** report points to alcohol and smoking as ongoing public health focus areas, while the **Austrian** report points to the increasing public health impacts expected by the changing demographics: people live longer, and already in 2030 there will be about 25 to 30 percent of people who are older than 60.

The Austrian report furthermore presents how they, through an internationally acclaimed process in 2012, had a series of public health goals defined in a broad and participatory process. The aim was to prolong the healthy life years of all people living in Austria within 20 years (until 2032) irrespectively of people's level of education, income or personal living condition.[6] This process was spurred by the WHO recommendations for the development of forward-looking concepts for a healthy population, and it involved stakeholders from relevant institutions and civil society.

In Denmark, Public Health, and whose responsibility it is, is widely debated. While there is a growing public sense that the individual needs to take a major part of the responsibility on her own shoulders, it is also expected that the public services are in place to support it. Similarly, patient-oriented prevention in close dialogue with health professionals is expected to be a part of the 'package'. The Danes generally believe that health is about more than avoiding what is unhealthy. It's also about having a good time and enjoying life.

In Ireland the health department in 2022 made its biggest investment ever in the funding of a 'Healthy Communities Programme', which with its preventive focus[7] aims to redress inequalities in access and health. The strategy accentuates the idea that clinical healthcare services alone cannot meet the health needs of the Irish Population. This programme is therefore closely linked with the modified mental health policy 'Sharing the Vision' 2020-2030 within which 'Social Prescribing' is given considerable weight as a valuable means of linking those struggling with socio-psychological and mental health issues to community-based supports and interventions through the local voluntary and community sector. **Both the Irish and the Austrian reports** point to the individualization of public health challenges, and the **Austrian** furthermore concludes the presentation of the post-Covid diffuse anxiety experienced in need of urgent

6 For more details, visit the Austrian country report

7 The Healthy Communities' Programme includes cancer screening, disability services, support for community and voluntary organisations; drug and alcohol inclusion services, better healthcare for travellers, the homeless and refugees, better mental health services, and inequalities in accessing physical activities for kids and teens)

attention, as the report states: "If there is a societal No Future or No Hope feeling, there is the danger that this is going to an authoritarian way of politics."[8]

The inequalities in good health and in the differences between groups of populations accessing the services are highlighted in all four reports. This is found to present an urgent challenge to strengthened public health communication, to address the unequal levels of what in **Denmark** and **Austria** is referred to as 'health literacy'. There is in the reports a recognition that public health communication needs to be solution oriented with a focus on ways to drive social norms change. The **Danish** report recommends that one way of doing this will be by giving the microphone to the people confronted with health challenges, themselves, thus being as a part of the solution and not just as a part of the problem. This is already successfully happening in community media in **Spain** and **Austria**.

2.2 Information gaps in the field of Public Health

When addressing the issue of information gaps existing in the field of public health, all the four studies point to core issues of trust, of lack of sufficient literacy in four core areas, namely: health literacy, science literacy and literacy in itself – as well as media and information literacy (MIL). MIL covers the vast field of fake news, of misinformation, lack of transparency around social media mediated information, and uncertainty of sources, all related to MIL. The severity of each of these gaps reflects inequalities in our societies, according to the studies: there are in all four societies great differences between those who master the different literacies – and continually search for additional knowledge, and those who do not master them and either cannot oversee how to find time and opportunity to obtain the capacity to navigate the fields mentioned, or simply don't know what they are missing.

The Austrian report refers to a survey of health literacy of Austrians[9]. According to this, half of all Austrians find it difficult to assess how trustworthy health information is, and three out of four adults research health-related topics online. Almost half of those surveyed use social media platforms to find out about or exchange information on health-related topics. This despite the fact that they find it difficult to assess and appraise the information found there and whether there are commercial or other interests behind the information provided. With more than a third of Austrians finding it difficult to use the information they find to solve their own health problems due to challenges navigating the health system, the study underscores the urgent need for media literacy.

Similarly, **the Irish report** shares how information concerning protection is found to be overwhelming for the general public as information is constantly changing, and health experts disagreeing in terms of what measures should or should not be taken. This was found to result in confusion among the general public, nurturing conspiracy theories among others leading to vaccine hesitancy. With

8 Ibid.

9 part of the International Health Literacy Survey (HLS19)

nearly 60% of the Irish population having medium or low scientific literacy, the report stresses that it is not surprising that public confusion is common and trust in official governmental agencies limited.[10] The younger population focuses on well-known personalities, influencers, and peers on social media to inform themselves on matters of health rather than looking to public health sites, which do not receive nearly as many views.

The Spanish report highlights that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is still a theme of discussion in public health area, and despite increasing sources of information and diversity of online information, citizens' scientific literacy has not increased. On the contrary, a sector of the population still remains discontent with the performance of public institutions or are reluctant concerning vaccination policies. Specifically, the phenomena of fake news, disinformation and the emergence of sources of pseudo-medicine increased during the crisis of COVID-19. One study on COVID-19 conducted in **Spain** for instance found that one-third of the information about the pandemic contained falsehoods about scientific and health-related matters and identified four main types of hoaxes: joke, exaggeration, decontextualization, and deception.

The increase in disinformation on health has become a challenge for **the Spanish healthcare system**. A 2021 survey found that information about health in the media in general is very inaccurate or unreliable, without rigorous work contrasting sources of information. In addition, health professionals perceive that massive access to information causes patients to be more distrustful of their doctor's knowledge. This forces specialists to spend consultation time denying false information and to motivate patients to trust and to follow a medical prescription to deal with their diseases.

The Danish report quotes 2022 research about how after Covid, the importance and power of trust as a key determinant of health is documented. It is found to be central to both individual and public healthcare decisions and it shows how the increasing politicization of public health is undermining trust in healthcare systems across the globe. In Denmark this is less determining than in most other countries included in the study, due to the national level of trust. In Denmark, trust is the basis of most social interactions as well as business and government. In fact, Danes are considered some of the most trusting people in the world and topped in 2021 the Transparency International rating of nations. This societal trust extends to a trust in Danish institutions like the government, police, judiciary, health services and the public service media.

People who hold power in **Denmark** are trusted to act in the best interest of society. The study referred to above, with over 400,000 informants, suggests that Denmark's positive public health performance around the Corona pandemic is due to three important factors: (i) high social and institutional trust compared to other countries (90 percent of Danish people say they have high or moderate trust in the country's health authorities); (ii) Denmark has a low degree of political

10 For references to documentation behind the summary information provided here, kindly turn to the Irish report

polarization and misinformation; and (iii) the country embraces “samfundssind”, which loosely translates to “community spirit.” While the country struggles to include every resident in this dictum, especially immigrant populations, Denmark is generally a trusting society with a strong communitarian ethic.

Another core issue raised in the national reports are the national socio-structural inequalities determining inequality in where, and among which segments of society, major information gaps in
the field of public health are found.

The Austrian study shares how recent research shows that health literacy is more pronounced in certain population groups and less pronounced in others. For example, Austrians between the ages of 30 and 59 rate their health literacy lower on average than younger and older people. On average, people with little formal education, people in financially precarious situations, people looking for work and people with health problems have a harder time than those to whom this does not apply. According to the study, around a fifth of Austrians also have difficulties in dealing with vaccination information: Finding, assessing, and applying vaccination information is particularly challenging here.

The **Austrian** study furthermore shows a connection between health literacy and a healthy lifestyle: People with less health literacy eat and exercise less and assess their health poorer. In addition, people with low health literacy are more likely to be affected by chronic diseases and are less able to cope with them. This is also reflected in the healthcare system: according to the study, people with poor health literacy make greater use of the healthcare system and spend more days on sick leave.

The Spanish report pulls a gender challenge to the fore: “Women have been woefully neglected: does medical science have a gender problem?” is the title of a recent research report. Several of the experts interviewed in the Spanish national study highlight the underfunding of research in women's health, which – they stress – is a major public health challenge. Despite being half of the Spanish population and workforce, specific female diseases are not sufficiently known, and treatments are not efficient, so more research is needed. This is the case of cardiovascular diseases, rheumatoid arthritis, fertility issues, depression, socio-psychological conditions, or mental illness. Although the importance of social factors in health (such as gender, socialization, income) are well-known, the specialist or general media do not usually cover those factors as health determinants. Gender bias in medicine has only been lightly covered by Spanish media, and it is urgent.

The Danish report echoes the Austrian above, as the public health professionals and the community media specialists and activists consulted for this study stress that social imbalances are important also in the area of public health. The parts of the population pro-actively seeking health information are to a large extent those who already know most. The challenge is to reach the segments of the population who don’t know and who are not reaching out themselves. Health literacy is related to socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, education,

social status and ethnicity, but is also an independent resource and potential risk factor related to health, health practices and use of the health system. One of Denmark's prominent public health experts stresses that there is a great need to structurally address the rising polarisation of society in terms of health literacy, which she sees as one of the greatest challenges.

While the national reports demonstrate different impact points, the major information gaps in the field of Public Health in all four countries relate to knowledge represented by different kinds of literacy: health, science, media and information literacy – and finally literacy itself. This then in turn relates closely to trust, without which it is hard for information (literacy) providers to come through with messages. And these literacy challenges and information gaps tend to – all four studies document – be socio-structurally unequally distributed, which in most realities risk to bring added social polarisation. These inequalities can then be registered in all the different public health areas presented, including mental health and suicide, social cohesion, weight, smoking, and alcohol, with the Spanish study adding the gender lens: we know less about women's 'public' health and it is discussed much less.

2.3 Community Media's role to inform and engage communities?

In all four country studies, there is a general agreement that community media could have – and should have - a powerful role to play in informing communities about public health issues, be strong health literacy platforms, trusted by the communities. In **Ireland,** a Dublin-based General Practitioner feels that "community media can fill the role of securing calm, balanced reportage on public health because commercial media tends to frame information around 'interesting stories'". He sees community media as a valuable source "for more practical information, like answering the where, how, when that listeners need to know about issues like cervical checks, vaccination centres and low-cost counselling". Similarly, in the **Austrian** report a social expert and psychologist finds that community media could do much more than other media to let self-help groups and affected people's initiatives have their say.

Whereas in **Denmark** the 80-90% trust in the public service media means that the public finds their information needs met by them there, the **Spanish** report underscores that media concentration has favoured information homogeneity and thus, health issues are rarely dealt with in an independent and open way, in its own specific space or by specialized professionals. One negative effect found is that these media in presentation of people with disabilities use concepts with an implicit pejorative or stigmatizing meaning for people living with functional diversity, socio-psychological challenges or suffering from mental illness. Thus, health literacy is an important field of action for community media - to address disadvantaged or marginalized citizens.

All four studies point towards the need for community media to be used systematically and strategically, building on their proximity to the citizens. This is already happening in **Spain,** where community radio stations have opened their microphones to groups usually excluded or stereotyped by the media, such as

young people, people with socio-psychological challenges and mental illness, or people in prison. This facilitates social inclusion of these groups, helps to break down stereotypes, prejudices and self-stigmas. In many cities and towns in **Spain** there are programmes at community radio stations run by people diagnosed with mental disorder, some of them supported by professionals, some create on their own.

In the **Austrian** study an expert stresses how affected people want to articulate themselves and have the desire to be active, to contribute. It is important not to focus on the deficits, but rather on the talents of the people concerned. Simply illuminate the topic through a different lens, let the people who are affected by diseases have their say. The same experience is shared in the **Danish** report, where a public health specialist refers to several studies highlighting the important potential for community media of letting people speak for themselves, doing programmes about their situation, thus finding new solutions.

The study cites impactful experiences when people themselves are taking charge. As can be read in the **Spanish** report, community media in Spain actually give a voice (as producers or associates) to neighbourhood groups, educational communities (69.1%), social movements (76%), NGOs (64.8%), youth (75%) and women (70%). These media also acknowledge other minority groups such as people with functional diversity, socio-psychological or other mental health challenges (55.3%) as well as the prison population (43%). Public health is being covered through entire programmes aiming at increasing information and awareness about health. Many of these radio programmes are run by specialists or professionals of the public health care system (e.g., doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, etc.)

Contrary to this, the **Danish** report has found that partly due to the quality found in the national and regional public service media and the population's trust in it, partly as health was found to be too complex for ordinary people to handle by the community media volunteers, community media were not very active in the field. Some of those interviewed stressed that they would want to, but that they had not managed to find (public) health staff with time and interest to collaborate with them on a voluntary basis.

Based on our extraction of what is, presently, community media's role in view of informing and engaging communities around public health recognize that:

- Public health is important for all segments in the population – both those already well informed and those not health literate – this includes being gender sensitive as well;
- Public health issues are covered well in community media in Spain, and to some extent in Austria and Ireland, while in Denmark community media were not very active in the area;
- In Spain, as the public and commercial stations are not trusted, the community media have an important role to fill – and they do a lot to meet this expectation;

- People encountering public health challenges should get support to get a voice and to become the brokers of information relating to their own public health challenges. This is partly happening in all four countries;
- Inequal levels of health literacy in society is often closely linked to uneven levels of science literacy and in MIL. Addressing these inequalities were found to be urgent in all realities, and recognized as complex, as the public health systems in all four countries had acknowledged this challenge and were working on addressing it;
- Community media were found to possibly hold a part of the answer to some of the challenges identified in all four countries. This, as empowerment of people living with the mapped health challenges and without proper health literacy, ideally could be better reached through community media.

3. National Community Media Landscapes and Realities

3.1 Community media landscape and legal framework

We can find some similarities when we compare the history of community media in Europe and why citizens took the initiative to set up a radio or TV-station. Still, for the existence of community media the existing legal framework is crucial, providing an enabling framework for operation and for longer-term sustainability. The existence of specific regulation for the non-commercial broadcasting is not only the condition to set up stations on a legal basis, but it opens in most cases also the path for public funding. As the situation is each country case is specific, we present the community media landscapes and their legal frameworks one by one.

Community media landscape and legal framework in Austria

Austria is the country that has maintained the broadcasting monopoly for the longest time in Western Europe. It was the initiative of a minority-language radio station in 1989 and several other plaintiffs who filed a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg that opened the way for private broadcasting. The Court held in its judgment in 1993 that the broadcasting monopoly is a violation of Article 10 of the Convention on Human Rights. As a result, the Republic of Austria had to enact the legal basis for the licensing of private radio stations and later TV stations.

The first legal community radio stations started in 1998 and presently 14 Community Radios and 3 Community TV stations are holding a license. Even if the law on private broadcasting builds the legal basis for non-commercial community radio licenses and for private commercial stations, the media authority defines the specific mission of community stations in their licence contract.

In 2010, a specific fund for non-commercial broadcasters has been installed, since 2022 endowed with 5 million euros. This leads to an annual support from € 80 -

335.000,- for each community radio station and 400 – 700.000,- for the community TV stations. For some small stations, support from the non-commercial broadcasting fund makes up to 90% of their income.

All Community Media have a small team of paid staff for training and organisational tasks and up to some hundred volunteers who are responsible for most of the programme production. Community Media are the only media in Austria that represent the full actual language diversity with up to 40 different language programmes. Two organisations are active on national level: **The national federation of Community Media (VFRÖ),** with its focus on professional representation, and **COMMIT**, the Community Media Institute for further education, research and consulting, responsible for training and research.

Community media landscape and legal framework in Denmark

In **Denmark,** Community Radio - and later community TV - started on a legal basis in the mid 80ies. After the first initiatives working on cable in the 70ties, in 1983 a first period of experimental stations started based on a government initiative to break the monopoly of the past. After this period of experiment, the community media sector was formalised in Danish legislation and recognised by national legislation as a separate sector of broadcasting next to public service and commercial broadcasting. Presently, the sector is well established with 140 non-commercial local radio stations and 38 non-commercial local TV stations. Local radio and TV broadcasting remain predominantly non-commercial.

To be granted a community radio license it suffices for an initiative to prove the production of one weekly programme and the involvement of people from the local area. Most community stations are not active on a 24 hours basis daily. Many community radios - in some places up to 11 stations - share one frequency.

Public funding is at rather low level, although in 1988 a specific fund was introduced to support community Radio and TV. This fund has an annual budget of € 6 Mio. and received its funding until 2021 as part of the licencing fee – since 2022 from the national budget. 60% of that budget is dedicated to local TV and 40% to community radio. Each station can apply for support for a maximum of 15 h of programme production per week, which provides each station with a maximum subsidy of DKK 130,000 (17.500 EUR) per year for radio, and about DKK 800,000 (107,500 EUR) for TV per year. This limited public funding means that many stations are run by volunteers only, with some stations offering state and municipally funded positions, helping unemployed persons back into a work life. This is considered a win-win programme by the authorities and the stations alike, providing people with an entry job into the job-market in a safe and conducive environment, after which many move into the ordinary labour market. This scheme secures regular staffing of quite a few of the smaller community stations. While all stations operate with volunteers as an important part of their raison d'être - giving voices to ordinary citizens, who become media literate and ensure local anchorage - the volunteers are also what keeps the stations going. In Denmark, it has been found that smaller and more local stations are even more successful to involve a greater number of volunteers than bigger stations.

At a national level, there are two umbrella organisations: The **Danish Community Media Association (Sammenslutningen af Medier i Lokalsamfundet – SAML)** and the **Association of Local Radio and TV stations in Denmark, (Sammenslutningen af Lokale Radio og TV stationer – SLRTV**).

Community media landscape and legal framework in Ireland

In **Ireland,** community radio started on a legal basis in 1995 with a pilot project which led to regular community radio licences since 1997. As in many other countries also in Ireland thanks to some earlier initiatives, the community media sector has been recognised by national legislation as a separate sector of broadcasting beside public service and commercial broadcasting. The 2009 Broadcasting Act acknowledges that community media is a distinct component of media in Ireland with a duty to provide social benefit to the community they serve.

For community stations it is also obligatory to be representative of and accountable to the community they serve. Actually, there are 22 licenced community radios in Ireland spread all across the country including stations in urban and in rural areas. Many stations are very active in support of socially disadvantaged members of their local community, and some offer a broad range of training formats with a focus on media production but also on media and information literacy in general.

The **Community Radio Forum of Ireland (CRAOL)** is the national umbrella organisation which works consistently together with the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland to develop strategies to safeguard and develop community media. In 2019, the **Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI)** introduced a community media action scheme which included the development of a new 'Social Benefit Programme' in order to better meet the needs and social aims of the stations. With support from academic research, they worked to identify the more specific types of benefits generated by community media.

Community Media are also relevant actors in adult education. **CRAOL** developed a series of accredited training formats which can be delivered by member stations to interested organisations or participants. In accordance with the national education system, these formats are also recognized as formal education modules within the national qualification framework. **CRAOL** is furthermore responsible for an annual community radio day, which is supported by the media authority and serves as a prominent event to showcase and celebrate the sector's contribution to the Irish society. In 2021 the president of Ireland M. D. Higgins was present at the celebration providing his and the government's full support.

Community media landscape and legal framework in Spain

In **Spain,** the situation of community media is more diverse and contradictory than in many other countries in Europe. On the one hand there are as many as up to 300 community radio and TV stations active but they often lack a legal basis and official recognition. Furthermore, there are competing concepts of

community, free, citizen, educational, university … stations. Most of them are based on volunteer work.

The starting point of first community media initiatives dates back to Spain's transition to democracy in the mid 70ties. Despite this, Spain for a long time did not support the development of community media with supportive legislation. In 2010 the General Law on Audio-visual Communication (LGCA, 2010) for the first time recognized the existence of not-for-profit-making audio-visual and community services. But this law was not followed by specific regulations for licencing and promotion of these community media. Only in 2022 the new General Law on Audio-visual Communication (Law 13/2022, of July 13 - LGCA) brings forward a clear commitment to media diversity and presents specific regulations on community media licensing.

With this new regulatory regime, Community radio and TV stations that have been active for the last five years, may request a legal licence. At the same time the regulatory authorities are instructed to reserve frequencies for community media services. This new legal basis might also open the way for new sources of funding and the option for the initiatives to develop into stations in a sustainable and professional way.

The hard work of five regional and national umbrella organizations has also contributed to this current development. The diversity of these umbrella organizations is related to both the different concepts and the varying regional needs. The **Red de Medios Comunitarios (ReMC)**, the State Network of Community Media, was founded in 2005 and is joining around 70 radio and television projects. The **Free Radio Network** gathers around 20 media which define themselves as self-managed, non-professional, non-commercial and independent.

On a regional level there is the **Unión de Radios Libres y Comunitarias de Madrid** (The Union of Free and Community Radios of Madrid), a federation to coordinate and support community and free radios in the capital city. In Andalucía, several community radios are cooperating in the **Association of Municipal and Citizen Radio and Television Stations of Andalusia-EMA-RTV**. In Catalonia the **Xarxa de Ràdios Comunitàries de Barcelona (XRCB)** is made up of 60 FM or digital stations. Finally, the **Association of University Radios of Spain (ARU)** includes 34 university stations with a focus on training, which are also open to citizens participation and NGOs.

Community media landscapes and legal frameworks

It is in these widely diverse historical, legal, and activist-driven realities of the four case-countries that citizens' voices are finding their ways on to the public airwaves and online spaces as radio, TV, or internet-based media of the third media sector. The Council of Europe report '*Community Media - contributions to citizens' participation'*, which was launched in December 2022, outlines the significant challenges the community media sector has to deal with. For instance, there is a lack of formal recognition as a distinct third media sector beside public service and private broadcasting. The other challenges the report reflects on are

also present in our case stories, like a lack of funding or unfeasible and insufficient conditional funding, as well as a lack of formal recognition of the volunteer workforce. These challenges make it hard for community media broadcasting to achieve sustainability and remain relevant and reachable for the audience. This is, in the framework of the present E3J project and our focus here on Public Health, of utmost importance.

Seeing community media as potentially powerful contributors to meeting some of the challenges in securing an even and effective access to the citizens in Europe for a firmer and more rooted public health understanding and 'literacy', as well as access to the services, we will explore this in the sections below.

3.2 Community media's role and impact in MIL in case countries

Looking across the four country studies, in all their diversity and multiplicity, above all we find the commonly acknowledged role of community media as the trusted, local media reconfirmed. This is partly brought to the fore by underscoring how community media are platforms of social dialogue, different from the generally not trusted commercial and public media. There is a fundamental need to strengthen this role. How do we deal with the distrust of traditional media and scientific findings? Community media are in these country studies found to be the uniquely positioned platforms for securing an informed public debate on sensitive and life-important information.

We find that community media are powerful platforms of community dialogue on issues of importance to the community. In many realities they are the only source of locally relevant news and information, and in many realities, they are inherently trusted – a quality of core significance when talking about public health, where only trusted sources have access to provide people/users with helpful information. For this reason, community media are – with a few beautiful exceptions – widely underutilized.

Media and Information Literacy and Community media

Community media were in **all four countries** studied found to be very conscious of their role as educators of their communities in Media and Information Literacy (MIL). Media Literacy is found to be an emancipating tool, as one **Spanish** community radio station called it. The community media environments take their role very serious, providing their communities among others with an understanding of how the media work and how to operate in our mediatized world with ever developing and changing digital opportunities. This includes an urgent need to be able to operate in this reality, being able to spot disinformation and fake news.

In **Austria,** COMMIT (Community Media Institute for Further Education, Research and Consulting) leads on MIL training and training-of-trainers for the community media sector in the country. They point to both the classical understanding of MIL as promoted by UNESCO and to 'Critical Media Literacy'. **UNESCO emphasizes MIL** focusing on the ability to classify and use information, media and technologies in a critically reflective manner, which is important because more

people gain access to media and information through the use of digital technologies, and they produce media content themselves. UNESCO defines MIL against the background of human rights, especially the right to freedom of expression**. Critical Media Literacy highlights** the political dimension of media activity: It is important to promote a critical and reflective approach to media, especially since the reception, analysis and design of media content on individual, social and cultural levels require an understanding of interests, power structures, economic conditions and social dynamics. Both approaches build on the assumption that media literacy cannot be reduced to a purely technical, functional perspective, but that it requires a holistic, intersectional, and interdisciplinary orientation to meet the multiple social challenges in times of digitalization.

In **Spain** and **Austria**, community media play very active roles through training both larger groups of volunteers and station members in MIL, as well as providing training for the communities at large. In **Spain,** 80% of community radio stations were found to develop such MIL training processes. In **Austria,** this training is formally recognised by the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) and COMMIT is furthermore cooperating with the Federal Institute of Adult Education and the Austrian Society for Political Education, rooting community media's role in advancing media literacy more broadly in the country. In **Ireland,** the focus is primarily on preparation of future community media broadcasters, but the stations' role in disseminating credible information and making the complexities of embracing technology accessible to their audiences and community was locally applauded.

In **Denmark**, as in the smaller community stations in **Austria**, stations do not have the volume of new volunteers to set up training schemes, but provide one-on-one coaching, while having a more direct and personal contact to their volunteers. Several of the smaller **Danish** stations interviewed highlighted that they take MIL very seriously, and that besides from ensuring that the volunteer broadcasters are well versed in it, they include it in their programming where possible, to ensure that their community is well informed about opportunities and challenges in this area.

The role and impact of community media in public health

When looking to the more general role and impact of community media in relation to public health, the **Irish** community media were found to have a clearer and more visible profile after engaging in the 'Social Benefit Scheme'. Before this, stations tell about a lack of distinctiveness in trying to mark the sector out in the audio-visual ecosystem, and that it used to be difficult for a listener to tell the difference between commercial and community media. This absence of visibility was found, as local radio is very strong in Ireland, and there are many different sources of localised news radio. With the emphasis on the community media sector bringing 'social benefit', by promoting community cohesion and community living as well as strengthening the Irish language both in the programming and beyond, there is a positive expectation that the sector could see new opportunities in many ways.

In Spain, the role of community media programming on public health is significant. In the stations met, programmes about socio-psychological and mental health have opened opportunities for the broadcasters becoming increasingly more autonomous both in their programmes and in their lives, seeing how life opens up beyond their experienced illness. In **Ireland,** one of the stations met told about a daily morning programme addressing the many areas of public health with a solution-orientated approach. In **Denmark**, some of the very popular public health-oriented programmes in a couple of stations give the microphone to citizens who have been through an illness, telling about it in a portrait-format, explaining in ordinary words what it is all about, and about the route to recovery. In **Austria,** innovative formats are developed including, among others, radio workshops with people living with addictions, where they, collectively, produce radio programmes that are later broadcast, and in a series of programmes about HIV, where it is being examined in a holistic manner by addressing medical, psychological, social, and societal aspects. In **Spain**, furthermore, one station has a programme called 'science is feminine' aiming to popularize science and to empower and provide visibility to women scientists in the media.

Community media in **all four case-countries** focus on giving a voice to those segments of the communities traditionally without one, and the groups within the community with less opportunities to bring up their issues in mainstream media. Engaging the communities in the socio-political participation of the community in cultural and social local development is also found in all four countries. In all countries, community media are found to be inclusive, ensuring access for people with a wide fan of public health challenges to be on air either communicating about their health issues or in any other roles and functions. Especially the stations interviewed have highlighted the many broadcasters living with physical disabilities or socio-psychological challenges. In **Denmark** several of the stations met tell how they have qualified to be workplaces for persons wanting to re-enter the labour market after an extended period of illness or having been out of the labour market for other reasons – who are often also living with serious health issues. The community stations offer a secure, friendly environment, with both time and space to learn how to produce radio – and to be on the labour market. The new colleagues are paid by the authorities, providing much needed regular on-site man- and womanpower to the stations.

Inequality in access to health services – community media as a bridge

In several of the country studies inequality in health or health provision has been raised as an important public health challenge, which community media should – and often do – address. In **Austria**, the importance of public health has risen sharply in recent years and continues to do so, due to new challenges in the field. Focus is, among others, on reducing the impact of social inequality on health and the associated fair distribution of resources.

The **Irish** report highlights that inequality in health and access to health is an area that is a key challenge in health. The privatisation of health services and downgrading of state health services is something that the community media

endeavour to highlight, including by giving a voice to local people who are campaigning for better health services. These areas are often not given much coverage in mainstream media. Due to community media's proximity to the communities and their (health) challenges, it is stressed that community media need to be firm advocates there as well, for health equality in all ways.

Fear of providing incorrect information – Health being a complex field

Despite the good case examples shared here - and with more detail in the national studies - about community media's coverage of public health issues and the community impact this generates, it is highlighted in all four case-countries that community broadcasters producing programmes about public health approach the area with both respect and some hesitancy. This is due to the inherent risk to provide incorrect or incomplete information, which could have consequences for listeners.

In **Spain** and **Austria,** community media nevertheless successfully embark on programming in the field due to an absence of trust in (public) health information and thus a need for community media to fill the gap. They do so by engaging specialists from the medical, psychological and social fields to root information in professional hands. This has been attempted in **Denmark** without much success, at the same time as the public has a very high level of trust (80-90%) in (public) health information provided, giving the community media less urgency to engage. An exception was met with one of the stations interviewed wanting to provide public health information to their many ethnic communities – an area not covered by the public media in Denmark. One **Irish** station stresses that in some ways, while they do not have the resources of professional journalism for public health programming, they have more freedom to concentrate on local issues, and issues that mainstream media overlook.

3.3 Examples of good MIL and public health practice

Studies on Community media in Europe underscore that by being participatory, locally known and locally anchored stations, with open access and ongoing volunteer drives, everything that a community radio or TV station is about in Europe is MIL. When looking to their importance and role in public health information, this study has pinpointed important similarities and differences from country to country.

The fact that in all four countries community media broadcasters are mainly volunteers, there is a hesitancy in barging in to in-depth, thorough health programming, for fear of providing wrong information. This would be highly sensitive and potentially dangerous to the audience, and maybe also to the broadcaster. To cooperate with experts from the health system is one good of different solutions to deal with this worry.

Another overall contextual observation is that in national realities where the population has limited trust in national (public service) media, the community media have a huge and urgent gap to fill, providing communities with trusted information on public health. Differently, in realities where the population has a

high-level trust in the truthfulness and reliability of national public service media, the need for community media to engage in the field of public health, is found to be less urgent.

Some of the practiced responses to these challenges include:

- The production of live, magazine-format programmes, dealing with public health in all its variety and diversity, based on interviews with experts and 'experts on consequences' who live with the challenges. This is where the station does not, itself, present the medical facts. An example of such a programme is 'Lifeline', which is a Health, Lifestyle & Wellbeing programme that goes out Monday to Friday for the past sixteen years. This approach and life-span has generated a high level trust and confidence in the programme – and a large, regular following (Ireland).
- The production of technically in-depth (public) health programmes involving medical, psychological and social professional specialists on a wide number of health fields (Spain, Austria).
- The production of human interest stories, personal portraits, where people who have gone through a health challenge describe it, tell about ways of living with it and on the path to recovery (Denmark).
- The production of simple PSA-like (Public Service Announcement) regular programmes based on factual, simple, easily understood information provided to the stations by the authorities, which during the Corona pandemic were of particular importance, providing public information on how to prevent and diagnose/identify the illness (all four countries).

Some proposals for effective and impact-full public health programming

In all four country studies, *there is a general agreement that community media could have – and should have - a powerful role to play in informing communities about public health issues, being strong health literacy platforms, trusted by the communities.*

Furthermore, the studies point towards the need for community media to be used systematically and strategically, building on their proximity to the citizens, finding each their niche and to become strong amplifiers of social norms change.

The proposals for effective programming formats include:

- 'Cool facts' are good and needed when confronted with a situation like the pandemic. These should ideally be coordinated by the authorities to ensure simple, identical pieces of advice to stem up against uncertainty and limit space for disinformation and conspiracy to pop up;
- Be a community platform, amplifying information about public health relevant activities ongoing in the community (being a 'bulletin board'), be it one-offs like speeches and workshops; or engagement with local associations, networks, action groups or the like – do portraits of these groupings on website to ease community engagement;

- Map the local community, know the segments of the station's catchment-area with particular public health information and communication needs. Identify effective ways of engaging them, including understanding their desired programme formats, for engaging;
- Inform yourself about (public) health inequalities in your communities: who have access and opportunities and who do not? Identify what could be done to improve this situation? If it is an advocacy drive to call the attention of authorities, consider ways of doing this?
- Ensure understanding (public) health in the broadest terms – holistically;
- Some community media in Ireland, Spain and Austria have extended their community information and community mandate beyond the community media programmes – and have carried out community mobilisation and information-sharing events physically, on-site. They have organised workshops among particular public health-segments of the local community. All of this in synergy with ongoing community media programmes – for reinforcement;
- In all four countries the risk for public health programmes to become too boring and finger pointing has been pointed out. Many of the programmes presented in the national studies share examples of including humorous styles and in some of the programmes developed by – for instance – people living with socio-psychological and mental conditions, have been carried by an invigorating level of self-humour and self irony;
- In some realities where an analysis of the media habits and preferences of the communities less open to and informed about public health has been carried out, public health information has been presented on lifestyle programmes, as reality shows – which by others is found appalling as a way of exposing and potentially shaming a population group;
- In Austria a station had invited addicts to a workshop, where they developed a programme in the way that they wanted it to be, together;
- Provide a 'living room' for meetings and dialogue, and enabling interventions in public spaces (pedestrian streets, schools);
- Inviting into the station community groups affected by public health issues to develop their own programmes, such as nurses and nursing staff; private/family caregivers;
- An Austrian station had even developed a 'Care dance flash mob' to amplify a programme series they had on air;
- Short science information programmes – PSA-type - 5 minutes at a certain time every day – happens in both Austria and Denmark (PSA = Public Service Announcement);
- Have as a core objective to deflate stigmas and to include people with disabilities and other health challenges into the group without.

4. Recommendations on ways forward

Community media can become key actors for health promotion and empowering people to increase their control over and improve their health. They are by their design and structure an important link between public health guidance and the community. Community media are acting locally and use horizontal structures of production. They allow people to create their own means of cultural expression, news, information and dialogue.

Community media broadcasters, who act as volunteers most of the time, develop media skills as well as social skills. Community media are not only a tool of communication for people, they are also a place where people meet, exchange and debate at a community level. They are hubs for sharing information and knowledge and have a potential impact on public decision-making. The Council of Europe sees community media as an indicator of a healthy democratic society, whose mission lies in their independent and participatory nature.

Cooperation and exchange need resources, so that people from health organisations and institutions can prioritise to help and support implementing their program. This could mean that experienced staff is giving technical support to people at their live broadcasts. This already happens in some of the case countries (especially in Spain and in Austria) and in others not (Denmark).

Community media are places of social dialogue. There is a fundamental need to strengthen this role and to extend it to cover systematic and strategic social norms change.

There is a consensus in the four studies summarized above that:

- The people living with public health challenges should at best be the producers of their own community media programme. This to root the media literacy practice, to ensure health literacy among the groups themselves, to ensure the full validity of the content, for the programme producers to experience the empowerment coming from presenting a programme about something close to you, and finally, for the audiences to receive 'the real thing' and for stigma to evaporate;
- It is important to see not just the public health challenge in context but also the individual programme: ideally the community stations should have a social norms change strategy (see recommendations in 3.3 above);
- It is important in each national context to find ways of valorising these programmes, ensuring their visibility and importance and to ensure the (minimal) required funding to get it effectively off the ramp.

Part Two

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Public Health Literacy and Community Media in Europe

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Country studies

Austria

1. Overview national level discourse on Public Health

1.1 National level discourse on Public Health: Core challenges

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines Public Health as community action for improved community health. The Austrian Society of Public Health (ÖGPH) describes the term Public Health as a joint action to improve the health of the entire population in a sustainable manner. Health is thereby, according to the definition of the WHO, not merely seen as the absence of disease, but also as a subjective well-being, contentment or happiness. It also integrates body, psyche and social dimensions.

Public health addresses both responsibilities of society for more health, as well as responsibility from individuals. One of the key aspects is about empowering individuals to take on this responsibility. Another important aspect of Public Health is the responsibility at all levels of health care like disease prevention, cure and rehabilitation. Same as a consideration of "health in all policies", a recognition and joint effort for more Health in all policy areas like e. g. education, science, transport, environment, social affairs, finance, or security. Not least to mention an orientation towards science and reasonable use of public funds in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.[11]

According to the Austrian Society for Public Health (ÖGPH), the importance of public health in Austria has risen sharply in recent years and continues to do so. Evidence of this is the increasing number of workers in the field of public health, an increase in training opportunities and the increased awareness of the importance of public health research and measures by decision-makers in the health sector, but also in all other policy areas. Austrian society is confronted with numerous new challenges in the field of public health. The most important of these challenges are currently to reduce the impact of social inequality on health and the associated fair distribution of resources, the challenges posed by ecological and economic changes, and the problems that arise as a result of demographic change towards an aging society.[12]

In Austria, public health manifests itself in health goals adopted in 2012, which follow the WHO recommendations for the development of forward-looking concepts for a healthy population.

11 polis aktuell 3/2021: Public Health

12 ÖGPH – Public Health in Austria: https://oeph.at/public-health-oesterreich

The aims of the **Austrian Health Targets**[13] are:

- To provide health-promoting living and working conditions for all population groups through cooperation of all societal and political areas
- To promote fair and equal opportunities in health, irrespective of gender, socio-economic group, ethnic origin and age
- To enhance health literacy in the population
- To secure sustainable natural resources such as air, water and soil and healthy environments for future generations
- To strengthen social cohesion as a health enhancer
- To ensure conditions under which children and young people can grow up as healthy as possible
- To provide access to a healthy diet for all
- To promote healthy, safe exercise and activity in everyday life through appropriate environments
- To promote psychosocial health in all population groups
- To secure sustainable and efficient health care services of high quality for all

The health targets for Austria were approved by the Federal Health Commission of Austria and the Austrian Council of Ministers and were developed with the aim to prolong the healthy life years of all people living in Austria within 20 years (until 2032), irrespective of their level of education, income or personal living condition. Population health is profoundly influenced and determined by many sectors outside the health care sector e. g. by the settings where people live, learn, work, or play. Therefore, the Austrian health targets were defined in a broad and participatory process that involves stakeholders from relevant institutions and civil society - a process which has been regarded as exemplary at the international level. In 2019, the Austrian Society for Public Health (ÖGPH) has identified 11 **fields of action**[14] for Public Health:

- Climate protection and health
- Physical activity and exercise
- Nutrition
- Smoking
- Child and Adolescent Health

13 Austrian Health Targets: https://gesundheitsziele-oesterreich.at/english-summary/

14 ÖGPH – fields of action 2019: https://www.oeph.at/PublicHealthHandlungsfelder

- Health of older people
- Health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ*) people
- Health literacy of the population
- Work and health
- Vaccinations
- Primary care

The Covid-19-Pandemic has highlighted the importance of public health for the health of the population. Monitoring the pandemic situation by collecting data, introducing health protection measures, setting up nationwide testing and vaccination services, etc. are public health measures. However, the pandemic has also revealed – in Austria and many other countries – gaps and weaknesses in the area of public health, e. g. in communication. Dealing with future health challenges, e. g. due to pandemics and the climate catastrophe, is an essential task for public health, which in a globalized world can only be mastered through international cooperation.[15]

According to public health expert Hans-Peter Hutter, the pandemic has shown how important a well-functioning public health service is or would be. In his view, the problem is the extreme lack of resources and staff. In the context of the health effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, Hutter emphasizes the importance of wearing face masks. Above all, the protection of others should have been placed in the foreground more strongly. Hutter also criticizes public communication on the topic of fighting the pandemic and the spread of false information in this context. In his opinion, it would have been possible to prevent lockdowns in Austria with a general commitment to keeping distance, wearing face masks, washing hands and ventilating accordingly, in conjunction with functioning contact tracing and targeted testing. In addition to the health consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, Hutter also refers to the non-virological effects of the corona crisis on public health. These include consequences of the economic crisis and the associated existential fears, psychosocial effects of lockdowns (e. g. listlessness, excessive demands on parents, especially single parents, loneliness of older people) as well as other indirect consequences (e. g. lack of exercise, unhealthy diet). Public health aspects of the pandemic that receive too little attention include the health consequences of unemployment. In addition, the negative consequences of school closures, increased violence against women and increased alcohol consumption have to be mentioned.[16]

In 2030, there will be about 25 to 30 percent of people in Austria who will be in their 60s or older. Therefore, a public health perspective is needed; problems can

15 Laaber 2022

16 polis aktuell 3/2021

no longer be solved in one's own field alone. It is expected that Austria will need about 70,000 nursing and care workers by 2030.

According to a report by the Austrian Panel on Climate Change (APCC), the health consequences of climate change are already being felt today and are increasingly being classified as a threat. The strongest health effects are to be expected from increasing heat. Furthermore, climate change will lead to increased health impacts from pollen (allergies), precipitation, storms and mosquitoes (infectious diseases). Demographic changing (e. g. aging) increases the vulnerability of the population and thus intensify climate-related health impacts.[17]

According to social expert and psychologist Martin Schenk, who was interviewed for this study, the current multiple crises are also a problem from a psychosocial perspective. A lot of things are coming together: Covid-19, inflation, war, but also the climate crisis is perceived more as a threat, especially by younger people. Since the post-war period, people in Austria had to deal more with individual, family-related challenges and problems. Suddenly, there are now global societal problems that also affect us. This does something to the generations that have grown up in Austria since the 1970s. During the Covid-19 pandemic, mental illnesses have increased in the direction of stress disorders, adjustment disorders, and also suicidal ideation. There is a diffuse anxiety that often cannot be substantiated in real terms but can result in bad stress. This in turn slows down, depresses and makes people ill. If there is a societal feeling of No Future or No Hope, there is the danger that this is going to an authoritarian way of politics.

1.2 National level discourse on Public Health: Media discourse[18]

In case of health and social issues, the question is how suffering, fears or threats can be addressed and combated by media while still conveying confidence somehow. According to Martin Schenk, the public discourse on these multiple crises is always fear-generated. Fear is the business model of the tabloid media (and not only of them). Emotions like fear, anger and rage are believed to generate the most readers or viewers. Online, fear and indignation are the drivers anyway, because algorithms are programmed accordingly and reinforce this even more. A circle of powerlessness is created, which generates undirected anger. Someone then collects it and scapegoats are deliberately sought.

Almost 190,000 children and young people in Austria are affected by chronic diseases (such as metabolic diseases or cancer). According to Martin Schenk, this is not represented in the media as a societal, social issue. Often it is single mothers who have to care for a sick child alone, can only work part-time and do not have enough income. This often leads to a vicious circle of poverty. Meanwhile there is more coverage of mental illness, but still too little. Much more work should be done towards to destigmatise the topic of mental illness. Suicide reporting is also an issue, mentioning the Werther effect (where suicides are

17 APCC 2018

18 Interviews with experts for this study (2.2.2: Case Stories)

increased by reporting) and Papageno effect (suicide prevention reporting). On the topic of suicide, it would be important to address the whole field as an issue. According to Covid, suicidal thoughts among children and adolescents have increased. In 2-3 years, we would have to take a closer look because this often happens with a time lag and, unfortunately, suicide attempts occur after this time.

According to Karin Schuster, certified health and nursing professional with focus on nursing in the media, nursing coverage often lacks a solution-oriented approach. Whereas before the pandemic, nursing care only appeared in the media in connection with scandals, it is increasingly being reported on with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The negative approach often conveyed in this context is problematic. Opponents of Covid measures have increasingly made the staff in the now overburdened hospitals the target of their aggression, which, according to Karin Schuster, is also partly due to the government's miscommunication. The government has emphasized the overwork of nursing staff, but has not made it visible enough elsewhere. Thus, in her view, it would have been helpful to include nursing staff in the Corona Task Force as well. However, nursing itself had never had its say. In any case, the role of nursing and care should be put in a different, more positive light in the public eye.

Nursing scientist Andre Ewers believes that media coverage of nursing care is disastrous. The external presentation of how care is seen does not correspond at all to the actual work that is done in the care sector (for example, in nursing homes for the elderly or rehabilitation clinics). The population does not know thereby obviously which means professional care at all. It concerns in the reporting rather to represent this professionalism, which is not to be equated however with academization. Rather, a complete picture should be shown, such as what nursing does for overall care, what happens in the consulting or training area. Health literacy is a major topic here too.

According to Johanna Lehner, who is part of the community media programme 5mcc – 5MinutenClimateChance, the issues of climate change and the climate crisis have made it into media coverage, into a broader media landscape. Despite Covid-19 and other crises, media outlets now have their own sections, podcasts and newsletters on this topic. The problem, however, is that extreme weather events such as hot spells are reported, but this is often not linked to man-made climate change. The word climate change then often does not appear in this reporting. Furthermore, the focus is placed very strongly on these catastrophe reports and far too little on solutions. There are quite simply many solutions to the climate crisis that have already been addressed or tried out by science. This incomplete media reporting has the consequence that consumers fall into a state of rigidity or helplessness and the step into action is thus made totally difficult. If the media were to keep presenting these existing solutions, they would also be returning responsibility to politicians, who would then also have to take it on. It should be a matter of course for the major media houses, the quality media, to ask questions about the climate targets in prominent interview or news formats.

However, the quality media are also in competition with the social media platforms. Social media platforms are a practical tool for the climate movement in particular to network globally. At present, however, the false reports spread there are a major problem, and social media companies clearly have a responsibility here. Social media platforms would have to claim that no false information is spread on their channels. However, this is increasingly becoming a problem and must be taken seriously, as social media platforms have become the main source of information for many. Journalists must adhere to ethical rules if they want to do quality journalism. Therefore, ethical standards are equally needed for social media platforms.

1.3 Which information gaps do the public experience?

Being part of the International Health Literacy Survey (HLS19), a study surveyed the health literacy of Austrians. According to this study, half of Austrians find it difficult to assess how trustworthy health information is. The study also shows that there is a need to catch up in terms of media literacy. According to the study, three out of four adults research health-related topics online. Almost half of those surveyed use social media platforms to find out about or exchange information on health-related topics. It is difficult for many to appreciate the information found through these mediums. The greatest difficulty is being able to assess whether there are commercial interests behind the information provided. More than a third of Austrians find it difficult to use the information they find to solve their own health problems, to find their way around the health system and to assess treatment options.

According to the study, around a fifth of Austrians also have difficulties in dealing with vaccination information. Finding, assessing and applying vaccination information is considered to be particularly challenging here. The study shows that health literacy is more pronounced in certain population groups and less pronounced in others. For example, Austrians between the ages of 30 and 59 rate their health literacy lower on average than younger and older people. On average, people with little formal education, people in financially precarious situations, people looking for work and people with health problems have a harder time than those to whom this does not apply. The study also shows a connection between health literacy and a healthy lifestyle: People with less health literacy eat and exercise less healthy and assess their health poorer. In addition, people with low health literacy are more likely to be affected by chronic diseases and are less able to cope with them. This is also reflected in the healthcare system: according to the study, people with poor health literacy make greater use of the healthcare system and spend more days on sick leave.[19]

19 EPALE 2021

1.4 Where could CM fill its role as an information provider engaging local communities around PH?

In their study on the public value of community media in Austria Katharina Biringer, Helmut Peissl and Josef Seethaler highlighted five normative functions of community media as their public value: participation, articulation, complementary, media literacy, strategies of media convergence.

Public Value of Community Media[20]	
Participation function	Feedback, Plurality of languages, Broadcaster as network for exchange with the outside world, social participation, Empowerment of individuals as well as of groups, Community building, Broadcaster as network for in-house exchange, Broadcaster as a local political–cultural centre, Inclusion of underrepresented groups
Articulation function	Specific characteristics of the programme, Self-fulfilment, Authentic communication, Perception of the recipients, Function as a mouthpiece, Broadcaster as a safe space, Expertise, Live experience, Self-expression of the programme-makers, Responsibility towards the activity of a broadcaster
Complementary function	Niche topics: music, arts and culture, political and social issues, environment and ecological issues, miscellaneous topics; Process-oriented access, Coverage about local NGOs and of the local cultural life, Local reporting, Inclusion of underrepresented groups and organizations in the media coverage, Perception of those affected, Identity formation, Language use
Media Literacy function	Media knowledge, Media evaluation, Media activity, Media training, Children and youth media education, adult training, Usage of learned skills for a professional career, Gaining new perspectives
Strategies of Media Convergence	Creating awareness online for the show, Independence of time and place for the audience when offered online, Digitalization, Individualization, Online networking

Austrian community media cover all five normative functions of public value. Participation, articulation and complementary functions are strongly

20 Biringer, Peissl, Seethaler 2020.

interconnected and are building the core of the public value created by community radios and TV stations in Austria.[21]

A lot of these aspects refer also to the role community media could play on dealing with topics on Public Health. Community media are seen as a safe space and could be a factor of empowerment for people that are personally concerned by health topics. They could also fulfil a complementary function and shape the attention to health-related issues that are not present in other media. Helga Schwarzwald from the Austrian community media association VFRÖ emphasised that producing a programme or feature yourself plays an essential role in the acquisition of media literacy.[22]

According to Martin Schenk, community media could do much more than other media to let self-help groups and affected people's initiatives (e. g. such as those of chronically or mentally ill people), who also do their own education in the area, have their say. Don't just talk to the experts, talk to the people affected - they are often their own experts in certain areas. There is a large field for affected people who want to articulate themselves and also have the desire to help shape something. It is important not to focus on the deficits, but rather on the talents of the people concerned. Simply illuminate the topic with a different view, but let the people who are affected by diseases have their say. In terms of health, the classic service (e. g. mentioning crisis hotlines) is also important.

On the one hand, doing media by yourself is important. Martin Schenk also outlines projects and workshops with schools. For example, health topics can be addressed that also effect young people, such as nutrition, eating, eating disorders. Things can be worked on together, such as the portrayal of girls and boys or the topic of health/nutrition in the media. This can then lead to a joint radio or TV programme. In workshops at the community TV station Okto, students have always done their own research and once watched all the news broadcasts from a week on the topic of poverty and analysed who speaks on a topic and for how long. This could also be done with other media content and incorporated into a guided radio or TV programme.

The strength of community media in this context lies in the great creative scope they can offer in broadcasts and at events in the public sphere. Topics can be spread very widely here. According to Karin Schuster, nurses often lack technical know-how in dealing with media because they did not grow up with computers. Community media could also play a role in teaching technical media skills and offer relevant content in workshops.

Community media producers receive training and basic knowledge about how journalism works. As a broadcaster, you get a better understanding of how different media work and what is reported on and how. In Johanna Lehner’s view, community media are an essential part of our media landscape, reporting in a much more forward-looking, constructive and diverse way. Community media

21 Ibid.

22 RTR 2022

also show, through their structure and makeup, that a different kind of reporting is possible. More attention could be drawn to the way community media function in comparison to other media. One possibility would be to network more with other media in order to learn from each other. According to Johanna Lehner, there is also a need for more appreciation of community media. There is quality journalism in community media. In her opinion, conventional media can also learn a lot from the more constructive and better reporting in community media. The in conventional media often-displayed credo "only bad news is good news" ultimately doesn't help us on social and societal issues.

2. Overview national Community Media landscape

2.1 Mapping the environment: Austria[23]

Country overview: Population: 8,932,664; geographic area: 83,878 square kilometres.

Languages: German is the official language. In some regions, Burgenland-Croatian, Slovenian and Hungarian are recognised as official languages of autonomous population groups.

Minorities: 20.1% of the population are born in countries other than Austria, 17.1% are citizens of other countries (data from January 1, 2021). These include Germany (2.3%), Romania (1.5%), Serbia (1.4%), Turkey (1.3%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (1.1%). People with migration background (= 1st and 2nd generation) = 25.4 %.

Economic situation: After the sharp economic downturn in 2020, GDP grew by 4.5% in 2021 (in real terms). Economic growth was thus well above the rate of 1.5% in the year before the pandemic. According to the national definition, the unemployment rate was 6.3% in 2021 (according to ILO: World Bank, according to the national definition: 8.0%, compared to 9.9% in 2020).

Political situation: Since 2019, Austria has been governed by the conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), which has been part of the government since 1986, and the Greens, who are in a federal government for the first time. In autumn 2021, both Sebastian Kurz resigned as Austrian chancellor (due to corruption investigations) and his successor, Alexander Schallenberg. The new chancellor, Karl Nehammer, faces resurgent right-wing parties: the Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the MFG ("Menschen Freiheit Grundrechte"), which are profiting from ongoing protests against the COVID-19 measures.

Media market: Two-thirds of the Austrian population are highly interested in news. Television remains the most significant source of information, and the public service broadcaster has maintained a relatively high market share of about one-third of the television market. Although numerous radio stations and news sites have their origins in newspapers, printed newspapers are losing importance both as an advertising medium and a source of information, even among the 55+

23 This section is taken from the Media Pluralism Monitor: Monitoring Media Pluralism in the Digital Era. Application of the media pluralism monitor in the European Union, Country Report, Austria 2021

generation. For 36% of people under 24 years of age, social media is the most significant daily news source, and almost two-thirds of people under 35 use it as one of their sources. In general, traditional media use is declining, the trend toward using online media is steadily increasing, and, for all age groups, smartphones are the primary way to access news online.

COVID-19: The crisis led to higher use of traditional media (albeit mainly in their online versions) and temporarily to greater trust in the media in general. The extraordinary state support schemes for media companies established in 2020 are widely seen as effective in compensating for the decrease in revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but – like the Austrian media support system as a whole – not appropriate and fair because the primary beneficiaries of these special subsidies were (again) high-circulation tabloids and free newspapers. So far, job security measures seem to have prevented significant waves of layoffs; however, this cannot yet be said definitely. Despite creating a "hardship fund", it must be assumed that the economic conditions of freelance journalists have worsened. Another problem associated with the pandemic is online disinformation. Although the Austrian Press Agency APA, civil society organizations (e. g. www.mimikama.org), and some media outlets have started initiatives to combat online disinformation, no well-developed policy framework exists.

Regulatory environment: Since January 1, 2021, new laws aimed at combating hate speech on the Internet (Federal Law on Measures to Combat Hate on the Internet, 2020) and placing responsibility for (illegal) content posted by users to some extent on platform operators have been in force (Federal Act on Measures to Protect Users on Communication Platforms, 2020). Austria implemented parts of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) by amending the Audiovisual Media Services Act, the KommAustria Act, the ORF Act and the Private Radio Act at the end of 2020. The most significant changes concern the extension of the Audiovisual Media Services Act to video-sharing platforms as well as some improvements in the protection of minors and accessibility of media content for people with disabilities. Consumer representatives criticized that the legislator did not stipulate stricter provisions, as would have been possible under the AVMSD for media service providers subject to the jurisdiction of a member state. The EU Copyright Directive was transposed into national law in December 2021, but Austria missed the deadline for implementing the EU Whistleblower Directive on December 17, 2021. While, in February 2021, the government had agreed on a draft law on Freedom of Information (which has been the subject of wrangling for decades!), it is unfortunately currently on hold again.

The national legal framework within which community media operate.

In 1993, Austria was found guilty of violating Article 10 of the Human Rights Act, the right to freedom of expression. This was following a suit of the Carinthian community radio AGORA with other claimants at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Before that, attempts to launch an independent radio sector were suppressed and prosecuted by the state due to the law situation. Compared to other European countries, the monopoly of public service broadcasting in Austria

(ORF) was broken very late. Since 1998, fourteen community radio stations and three community television stations have been established all over Austria.

Although finally legalised, the struggle regarding legitimate recognition as non-commercial media as well as sustainable and secured funding has continued. Community media are considered to be private media (along commercial media), according to Austrian broadcasting law. But laws and organizational structures required by Community Media are significantly different from those of commercial and public service broadcasting. A special fund for financial support of community media has been established in 2009. The funding is bound to numerous guidelines, which partly overlap with the Charta der Freien Radios ('Charter of Free Radios'): open access, participation, benefit to the public, transparency, local and regional coverage, independence, no discrimination, freedom of opinion and a certain amount of self-produced programming are demanded. In 2020, community TV stations were integrated into the Verband Freier Rundfunk Österreich. By that time the Charter was revised and is now called Charta des Freien Rundfunks (Charter of Austrian Community Broadcasters*24*). The charter is modelled on the charter of AMARC*25* and it also resembles the definition of community media given by the European Union. *26, 27*

In this charter, Austrian community radio and TV stations voluntarily follow the code of honour of the Austrian press. Since 2021, they have had the opportunity to submit to the self-regulation of the Austrian Press Council. As of December 2022, nine broadcasters are taking part in this system of media self-control by the Press Council (Freies Radio B138, Freies Radio Innsbruck – FREIRAD, Freies Radio Salzkammergut, FS1 - Freies Fernsehen Salzburg, OKTO, ORANGE 94.0, radio AGORA 105,5, Radio FREEQUENNS, Radiofabrik - Freier Rundfunk Salzburg).*28*

In 2022, the increase in the non-commercial broadcasting fund from three to five million euros was anchored in law. The funding is awarded by the media department of the RTR - Rundfunk und Telekom Regulierungs-GmbH, the Austrian Broadcasting Regulatory Authority. This increase of funding is strongly supporting the technical, organizational and editorial infrastructure.*29*

Profile / organisation of Community Media In Austria

In Austria, there are 14 licensed community radios and 3 community TV stations. Located in every of Austria's nine federal states, more than 3000 people (most of

24 VFRÖ 2020

25 AMARC charter: https://amarceurope.eu/who-we-are/amarc-charter/

26 Biringer, Peissl, Seethaler 2020

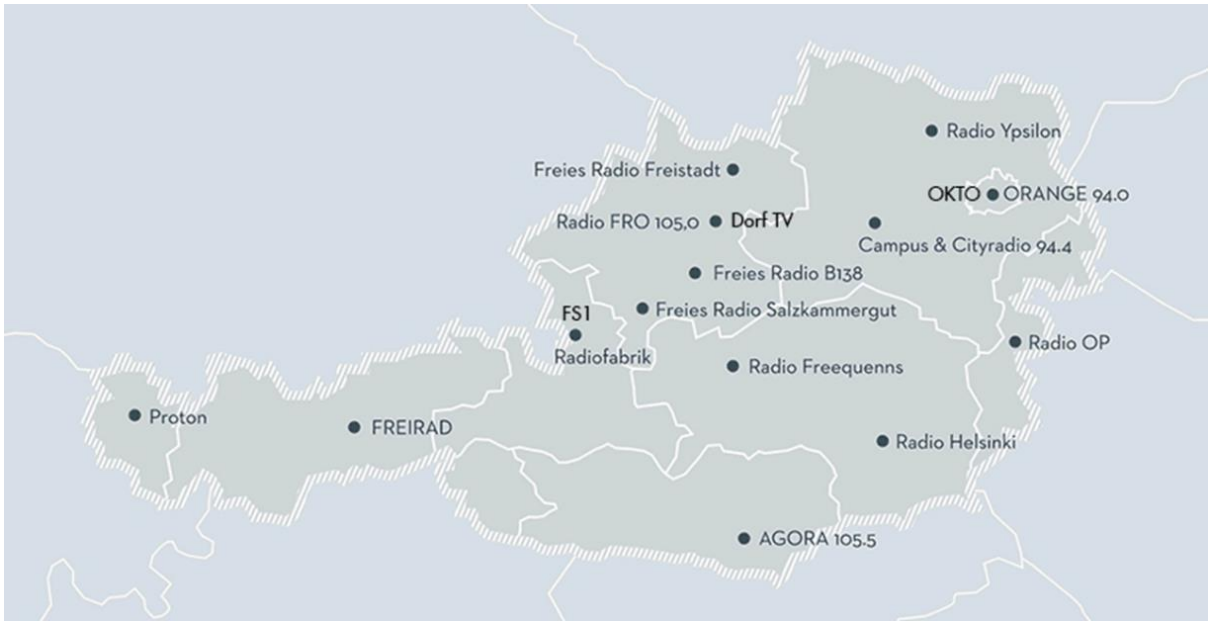
27 The Council of Europe recognises the value of community media as a source of local content, cultural and linguistic diversity, media pluralism, social inclusion and intercultural dialogue: https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/community-media

28 OTS/Presserat 2021

29 VFRÖ 2022

them are volunteers) are producing around 400 hours of content per day in more than 40 different languages (VFRÖ 2018).

With the 3 Community TV stations OKTO (Vienna), Dorf TV (Linz) and FS1 (Salzburg) located in urban areas, Austrian Community Radios are located in both cities and rural areas. Radio Orange 94.0 (Vienna), Campus & Cityradio 94.0 (St. Pölten), Radio FRO (Linz), Radiofabrik (Salzburg), FREIRAD (Innsbruck), AGORA (Klagenfurt), Radio Helsinki (Graz) are situated in federal states capitals, whereas Proton (Dornbirn), Radio Freequenns (Liezen), Radio OP (Oberpullendorf), Radio Ypsilon (Hollabrunn), Freies Radio Freistadt (Freistadt), Freies Radio B138 (Kirchdorf), Freies Radio Salzkammergut (Bad Ischl) are located in more rural areas.



30 Graphic: Community radio & TV stations in Austria

The community radio stations have a technical range of 35 per cent, while this range is 27 per cent for the community TV stations. Since 2000, all community radio stations in Austria have the opportunity to upload their shows to the Cultural Broadcasting Archive (CBA). Currently over 134,000 programmes are available online.*31* The broadcasters thus not only can provide their shows for free download but also to exchange parts of the programme with other community radio stations. This enabled them, for example, to broadcast the daily produced coronavirus news from Radio Helsinki to all stations.*32*

The organizations that comprise the Austrian community radio landscape are generally mixed-model broadcasters that cover a local geographic area, aspiring to serve the communities identified within their geographic reach. Thus, they typically feature a wide range of programmes about social, cultural, and political

30 VFRÖ, stations: https://www.freier-rundfunk.at/sender.html (Graphic adapted by COMMIT)

31 Cultural Broadcasting Archive: https://cba.fro.at

32 Biringer, Peissl, Seethaler 2020

subjects important to the local community, produced by individuals and teams of mostly volunteer participants. These volunteers are tasked by organizational charters and regulatory guidelines to observe and promote the values and philosophies of community broadcasting, both in the programs they offer, and within the organizations they operate.

Because the Austrian technological model for community radio deploys citywide standard FM broadcast coverage areas, the largest cities in Austria predictably also have the largest radios in terms of volunteers, staff and subsidies. In Vienna, Radio Orange is an iconic institution among the diverse population, with more than 500 participant producers making programmes in more than 15 languages. Radio FRO in Linz and Radiofabrik in Salzburg are also large organizations with hundreds of volunteer participants from a diverse number of communities. In terms of enabling policy, organizational development, volunteer participation, and service to diverse communities, the Austrian community radio sector can be seen as among the most successful in Europe. The success of the community radio sector also helped spawn the community television sector in Austria, as activists from these radios substantially contributed to establishing new community televisions in Austria. The three television channels of Austrian community television sector developed in sequential overlapping time frames, beginning in 2005 with OKTO TV in Vienna, followed by the 2010 debut of DORF TV in Linz, and finally in 2013 with FS-1 TV in Salzburg. Each television originated as an independent organism within their local, social, economic, political, and technical environments, and each developed within the governance and funding of the media regulator RTR, complemented by local and regional government support.[33]

The interests of Community Radio and TV stations are represented by the **Verband Freier Rundfunk Österreich (Association of Austrian Community Broadcasting)**. The Association is supporting effective and sustainable operation of member radios with capacity-building initiatives. The charter guides the sector with a set of principles which govern the participants and organisational members.

COMMIT (Community Media Institute) is the educational institution for Austrian Community Radio and TV, working on the field of education and training as well as on cooperation between community media, adult education and research. COMMIT cooperates with educational and media initiatives and institutions within the framework of events and projects in Austria and Europe. A key aspect in these activities is the topic of Media and Information Literacy.

How are community media reflected in the Media Pluralism Monitor?

According to the Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM), Austria has a well-developed system of community media. The indicator on access to media for local/regional communities and for community media represents a low risk. There are several reasons for this according to the MPM. Primarily, there is a significant number of

33 Loeser 2014

television and radio frequencies which is related to regional or local service areas. Access to these frequencies is regulated via public tendering. Subsidies for private radio and television companies are explicitly contingent upon providing local or regional programmes and promoting local and regional identities which applies also for community media. Broadcasting laws lack consistent legal recognition of community media as a third broadcasting sector in terms of function, mode of operation and financing – even though they perform a wide range of valuable public functions, they are firmly anchored in their respective local environment and operate without political interference.

Unfortunately, the Austrian Telecommunications Act does not provide sufficient details about licensing processes and criteria for community media. The political guidelines for awarding subsidies are therefore only partially appropriate and not very fair. While state subsidies for private-commercial broadcasting were increased by 33% in 2019 and have since amounted to 20 million euros per year, subsidies for non-commercial broadcasting have remained unchanged at a very low level (3 million per year until 2022, where the funding increased to a total of 5 million euros per year). The country report outlines that the funding conditions place higher demands on non-profit broadcasting than on commercial broadcasting in terms of democratic functions. Therefore, a plural media system must be built on three pillars: public service media, private commercial media, and non-profit community media. Ensuring the financial sustainability of community media and increasing their numbers must be considered a priority. This is in line with a recommendation of the Council of Europe on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership.[34]

Are community media referring specifically to specific MIL concepts in their practical work?

In their study "With every show I learn something" Meike Lauggas and Helmut Peissl examine the learning opportunities and contributions towards lifelong learning that can be accessed in the Austrian community media sector. This learning process includes organised training courses as well as informal settings which can be found in six topic areas:[35]

1. **Using Technology**: according to the study this is the most immediately identifiable acquirable skills area, which is used the most and also has a strongly demystifying effect.
2. **Speech and Language**: the microphone plays a significant role for presenters due to the corroborative effects on self-perception and perception of others.

34 Media Pluralism Monitor: Country Report, Austria 2021

35 Lauggas, Peissl 2016

3. **Participation and Discussion** of social and cultural offerings is increased as well as increased amounts of reading and writing result from such media work.
4. **Making Contact** with other people in the studio, on training courses, for programmes etc., also in the context of meeting public figures. This involves the strengthening of social capital and enhanced development of social skills.
5. **Dealing with Media Audiences**: dealing professionally with external as well as in-house broadcasting products.
6. **Courage and Spontaneity** are described as constituting elements of radio work, and which themselves also enable enjoyable learning.

Most of the community radio and TV stations offer training courses where they deliver the basics of community broadcasting, including recording, editing, editorial basics, presentation skills, ethical and legal basics same as other media-related skills. This could be a single workshop covering more of these elements ("Basisworkshops") or a longer training course for volunteers or editorial teams ("Lehrredaktion"). Smaller community stations in Austria work more with one-on-one coachings while having a more direct and personal contact to their volunteers.

The most favourable conditions for training cited by participants in the study "With every show I learn something" include convenience of the location or being able to train on the job or "learning-by-doing" at the radio station, having personal contacts at the station, being able to decide for oneself and in accordance with personal interests if and what is to be learned and having freedom in terms of content and design with regard to broadcasting. Reflecting the eight EU key competencies for lifelong learning, the authors outline the skills that can be acquired in the non-profit community media sector and the sector's potential as a training provider. This is already recognised in the form of traineeships, apprenticeships and cooperative ventures with educational institutions and the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS).[36]

Being the educational institution for Austrian community radio and TV stations, the Community Media Institute COMMIT is offering trainings focused on media and journalistic skills and improving train-the-trainer competences. With a focus on the intermediation of Media and Information Literacy (MIL), COMMIT is cooperating with the Federal Institute of Adult Education (bifeb - Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung) and the Austrian Society for Political Education (ÖGPB – Österreichische Gesellschaft für Politische Bildung). When working on the topic of Media and Information Literacy, COMMIT is referring to the UNESCO MIL Curriculum and the concept of Critical Media Literacy by Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share.

36 Ibid.

Both concepts are based on the assumption that media literacy cannot be reduced to a purely technical, functional perspective, but that it requires a holistic, intersectional and interdisciplinary orientation in order to meet the multiple social challenges in times of digitalization. **Media and Information Literacy** according to the UNESCO emphasizes the importance of the ability to classify and use information, media and technologies in a critically reflective manner. This becomes more important because more people gain access to media and information through the use of digital technologies and produce media content themselves.

UNESCO defines MIL against the background of human rights, especially the right to freedom of expression. The acquisition of MIL embeds itself in lifelong learning and is a fundamental prerequisite for participation, securing peace and sustainable development in democratic, knowledge-based societies.

Critical Media Literacy emphasizes the political dimension of media activity: It is important to promote a critical and reflective approach to media, especially since the reception, analysis and design of media content on an individual, social and cultural level requires an understanding of interests, power structures, economic conditions and social dynamics.[37]

Several projects (funded by the ERASMUS+ programme of the European Union) dealing with Media and Information Literacy are to mention that are a reference for community media in Austria. **SMART (Specific Methodologies and Resources for Radio Trainers)**[38] is addressed to radio trainers in community media and offers selected and valid training exercises and methods even to specific target groups to create radio trainings. The objective behind the project **EMAC (Ethical Media for Active Citizenship)**[39] is to provide citizens, journalists and media activists with valuable competences to face editorial challenges like fake news/alternative facts, infomercials vs. information, freedom of speech and hate speech and help them to develop diversity and pluralism in media. In this project, training activities, terminology glossaries and general guidelines for reporting were designed to help in different stages of qualification and experience to report more fairly about minorities. The Project **LEMON (Learning Ethical Media Online)**[40] is an enhancement of this sensibilisation towards sources and premises of media products. The activities and tools developed in EMAC are going to be implemented into an online course helping to argue against false premises, hate speech elements in media products and work more inclusively towards minority groups. The project is going to be finished until summer 2023.

Media and Information Literacy is taught on many levels, including workshops and projects with school pupils and students. Since 2013, the community radios

37 Peissl, Sedlaczek 2022

38 SMART: https://smart.radiotraining.eu/de/

39 EMAC: https://ethicalmediatraining.eu/

40 LEMON: https://inclusivemediatraining.eu

have jointly organized the **Schulradiotag** (school radio day). On this day, school pupils show how creative they are with radio in contributions that are broadcast simultaneously on all radios: they create reports, radio plays, interviews, news and more. **Wiener Bildungsserver**[41] is an association active in the field of media education and training for schools and also involved in the School Radio Day. Wiener Bildungsserver hosts the media education project **Radiobande**[42], where Viennese students create their own broadcasts. According to the project Radio production leads to sensitized media perception, refines the use of language and speech, encourages active media use, and at the same time is a media mouthpiece for the world of students and young people.

2.2 Community Medias role and impact

Austrian community media programmes on Public Health

For this study, programme coordinators of Austrian community media were asked about public-health-related programmes in their stations. Furthermore, desk research was done online to compile an overview. Some examples from this research are presented in the following, before focusing on four case stories. This is not a full survey of all existing programmes in Austrian community media that are related to Public Health.

Important to mention is the field of **inclusive media work**. People with different disabilities are active in community broadcasting all over Austria. Ernst Tradinik created a website[43] where he collects media projects on inclusion and barrier-free media work. Ernst Tradinik is a lecturer for the scientific discipline on inclusive media work at St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences and produces the inclusive show **NA (JA) GENAU**[44] for the Viennese community TV Okto.

Located at the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences, Campus & City Radio St. Pölten has a topical focus on social inclusion in form of several programmes dealing with this issue. One of them is the radio programme **Vom Schatten zur Sonne**[45] presented by the radio group **Bündnis gegen Depression** (alliance against depression). Topics related to depression are in the centre of this programme, e. g. information is provided about possible care services or how to deal with the disease in public and in private. Campus & City Radio St. Pölten is also cooperating with Grüner Kreis, an association for the rehabilitation and integration of addicted people. In radio workshops with addicted people radio programmes are produced and broadcasted. Four programmes in Austrian

41 Wiener Bildungsserver: https://bildungsserver.wien

42 Radiobande: http://www.radiobande.at

43 Website on inclusive media work & projects in Austria: https://inklusive-medienarbeit.at/

44 NA (JA) GENAU: https://www.okto.tv/de/sendung/najagenau

45 Vom Schatten zur Sonne: https://www.cr944.at/2020/12/10/vom-schatten-zur-sonne/

community radios are dealing with the topic of nursing and care: [46] Radio FRO (**Wen wählt die Pflege?**), Freirad (**Pflege diskursiv**), Radio Helsinki (**Pflegestützpunkt**) and Radiofabrik (**Fokus Pflege**). Both Pflegestützpunkt and Fokus Pflege are part of our case stories. At Radio Orange 94.0 (Vienna) and Freirad (Innsbruck) the local AIDS-Hilfe is present with information broadcasts on HIV. In these programmes HIV is examined under medical, psychological, social and societal aspects.[47]

At Radio Orange in Vienna, the ambulance of the **Samariterbund**[48] has its own radio programme with focus on topics like e. g. the support for people in need of care and the elderly, (self-)help for homeless men and women, humanitarian aid and disaster relief at home and abroad, assistance for refugees in need, training and therapy for children at risk of poverty in Austria.

GO-ON[49] is a quarterly radio programme conducted by a suicide prevention centre under the same name, broadcasted at Radio Freequenns in Liezen. The radio programme **Psychiatrie in Bewegung** (Freirad, Innsbruck)[50] addresses aspects around mental health - in connection with our society and the institution of psychiatry. Salzburgs community radio Radiofabrik hosts a health magazine dealing with various health-related topics called **Ich, gesund!**[51] From the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic Radio Helsinki in Graz broadcasted updates on Coronavirus: **Frequently Asked Questions - Das Corona-Update aus dem Freien Radio**[52].

Environmental issues, sustainability, climate and climate change are present in several community radio programmes and in common topical programmes by all community radios (**Gemeinsamer Themenschwerpunkt der Freien Radios**). Some radio programmes to mention here are e. g. **Exit Green Radio** (Campus & City Radio St. Pölten), **Freies Radio Freistadt for Future** (Freies Radio Freistadt), **Klima und DU** (Freies Radio Salzkammergut) and **5mcc – 5MinutenClimateChance** (Orange 94.0).[53]

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46 Wen wählt die Pflege? https://www.fro.at/wen-waehlt-die-pflege/, Pflege diskursiv https://cba.fro.at/547775, Pflegestützpunkt https://helsinki.at/projekte/pflegestuetzpunkt-3-0/, Fokus Pflege https://radiofabrik.at/programm/sendungen/sendungen-von-a-z/fokus-pflege/

47 AIDS Hilfe Tirol (Freirad): https://www.freirad.at/alle-sendungen/?sendung=1&termin=312, Radio Positiv (Orange 94.0): https://o94.at/programm/sendereihen/radio_positiv

48 Tatü tata et cetera: https://o94.at/programm/sendereihen/tat-tata-et-cetera

49 GO-ON: https://www.freie-radios.online/sendereihe/go-on-das-leben-ist-es-wert

50 Psychiatrie in Bewegung: https://cba.fro.at/podcast/psychiatrie-in-bewegung

51 Ich, gesund!: https://radiofabrik.at/programm/sendungen/sendungen-von-a-z/ich-gesund/

52 FAQ: https://helsinki.at/news/corona-update/

53 Exit Green Radio: https://www.cr944.at/2021/03/11/exit-green-radio/, Freies Radio Freistadt for Future: https://www.frf.at/2019/10/freies-radio-freistadt-for-future/, 5mcc: https://5mcc.at/, Klima und DU: https://freiesradio.at/sendungen/klima-und-du/

Case stories: experts on Public Health and their community media programmes

For this study we talked to Andre Ewers, Johanna Lehner, Martin Schenk and Karin Schuster who are all active as community media broadcasters in Vienna, Graz and Salzburg. They also have in common that they are dealing with several aspects of Public Health in their professional backgrounds same as in their media programmes. First of all, we want to introduce the people behind our case stories and their community media programmes.

Andre Ewers is a nursing scientist, specialist nurse for anaesthesia and intensive care, coordinator of clinical nursing science and nursing research at the University Hospital Salzburg. He is host of the radio programme Fokus Pflege (Focus Care) at Salzburg's Community Radio Radiofabrik. **Fokus Pflege** is a radio programme of the University Hospital Salzburg. The monthly show is a mixture of reports, discussions and opinions on the practical development of nursing including a roadshow on the different professional fields with their specific tasks, characteristics and qualification levels. Fokus Pflege also repeatedly conducts a discourse on professional policy issues and the search for real-life answers, combined with the question: Where is nursing headed? Guests on the programme are people from different institutions, disciplines and fields of activity, both from nursing practice and management, science and pedagogy. **Radiofabrik** is a community radio station in the Austrian city Salzburg, operating since 1998. Currently there are 185 radio programmes on air, produced by more than 350 community radio producers.[54]

Johanna Lehner is a member of the production team of the radio programme and podcast 5mcc - FünfMinutenClimateChance (five minutes climate chance), broadcasted at Radio Orange 94.0. She studied geography and worked in the media projects Luksuz Produkcija (SLO) and Women on Air (Radio Orange 94.0). Currently she is an editor for the online magazine Nachhaltigkeit. Neu denken (Rethink Sustainability) and engaged in the concept of constructive journalism. **5mcc - FünfMinutenClimateChance** is a transdisciplinary audio format that focuses on constructive climate change communication.

The content conveyed illustrates the multi-layered significance and impact of climate change and wants to create awareness. Through easy-to-understand, humorous and fact-based media formats, filter bubbles are to be broken and knowledge about climate change is to be brought closer to young and old. The aim is to arouse interest in the topic, even among those who have not been interested so far, and to highlight opportunities for combating climate change. The radio programme/podcast is produced by Alexandra Reichinger, Franziska Hörbst, Martin Mehrwald, Balduin Landl, Katharina Toth, Lukas Weymann, Lena Ruhaltinger, Hannah Gläser, Hannah Hofbauer, Dominik Jahn and Johanna Lehner. **Orange 94.0** is a community radio based in Vienna. On Air since 1998,

54 Fokus Pflege: https://radiofabrik.at/programm/sendungen/sendungen-von-a-z/fokus-pflege/, Radiofabrik: https://radiofabrik.at/

Orange currently broadcasts over 200 community radio programmes in more than 20 different languages.[55]

Martin Schenk is a social expert and psychologist as well as deputy director of Diakonie Austria and co-founder of the Poverty Conference. His focus is on welfare policy, health, children/youth and integration. Martin Schenk is co-initiator of numerous social initiatives: Hunger for Art and Culture (culture for people without money), Wiener Spendenparlament (voices against poverty), Verein Hemayat (care for severely traumatized people), Sichtbar Werden (people affected by poverty organize themselves). He hosts the programme eingSCHENKt on Viennese community TV Okto. In the community TV programme **eingSCHENKt** social expert Martin Schenk talks with a guest from the fields of economics, political science or social science about explosive topics such as unemployment, poverty, exclusion and integration. In addition to an analysis of current conditions, the main aim is to show that sociopolitical and economic decisions are never unchangeable and that there are always alternatives. The show is a broadcast of the media and social project Augustin. **Okto** is a Vienna based community TV, active since 2005.[56]

Karin Schuster has been working as a certified health and nursing professional for 30 years. As part of a university journalism master's course, she studied the image of nursing in the media. For the past 12 years, she has been active as a broadcaster at Radio Helsinki (and member of the programme Radio Attac), focusing mainly on activist issues that can be "taken to the streets." Since 2018, she has been leading the project Pflegestützpunkt (care support point) at Radio Helsinki. The project **Pflegestützpunkt** continues to promote the exchange of experience, networking and creates the necessary discourse spaces to discuss the future of care together and to find solutions, in Graz and nationwide. Care work - paid and unpaid - must be made more visible and audible and finally appreciated! Pflegestützpunkt 3.0 includes a year of radio broadcasts, panel discussions, care regulars' tables, a care dance flash mob, a theatre workshop for care trainees, and events in public spaces. The diverse settings invite interested parties to join. **Radio Helsinki** is located in the city of Graz and was active as a pirate station from 1992 to 1995, when becoming the first community radio station in Austria to broadcast legally in September 1995.[57]

2.3 Good MIL and PH practice from case stories:

How is good PH coverage organised and presented? Characteristics?

The community TV programme **eingSCHENKt** has a focus on social science. It is a science programme that tries to break down scientific issues and make them understandable for the general public. It also deals with topics and scientists that are otherwise not so often in the media. It is not a question-and-answer game,

55 5mcc - FünfMinutenClimateChance: https://5mcc.at/, Radio Orange 94.0: https://o94.at

56 eingSCHENKt: https://www.okto.tv/de/sendung/eingschenkt, Okto: https://okto.tv

57 Pflegestützpunkt: https://helsinki.at/projekte/pflegestuetzpunkt-3-0/, Radio Helsinki: https://helsinki.at

but rather intended to allow more time and to be able to deepen thoughts. Martin Schenk is responsible for the content. Technically, there is support from Okto in the studio: a director, two cameramen, sound engineers. Without that support the production wouldn't work.

The central task for the radio programme **Fokus Pflege** is to transfer science into practice. The goal is to package scientific findings in such a way that they don't just have to be read. This is also how the idea for the radio programme came about. In addition, due to the pandemic, there were great uncertainties regarding vaccination, vaccine, regular testing, etc. As a result, there were online events at the hospital where people were informed about this. This was ultimately a further impetus for the radio programme. With the radio broadcast, the focus is to be placed on professional care, which is also integrated into the broadcast in all its diversity. In addition, completely consciously one tries to counter the often medially mediated, bad picture of care with positive aspects. Previous broadcast topics were for example: Communication and collaboration with stakeholders in the pandemic, psychosocial emergency care, nursing: nursing education curriculum, professional policy issues. Behind this is often the question of what contribution nursing makes to the overall construct of health care?

The project **Pflegestützpunkt** is always designed for one year, as funding applications are always submitted for one year. In addition to the radio programme, there are various events for caregivers, such as the Pflegestammtisch (a regulars table), which is intended for exchanges between caregivers. In addition, there are events around the topic in the public space, such as panel discussions, a trade fair or a "care dance flash mob". There are also various workshops specifically for nursing staff in training, such as on the self-image and external image of nursing. The whole project has an informative, connecting, participatory approach and is always experimenting with different formats. Karin Schuster is responsible for the concept and organization. Around the ranges public work, diagram, technology and finances it is supported however by radio Helsinki in Graz. The networking of the various actors within the project and the steadily increasing number of cooperation partners should be emphasized. In addition, in the third year of the project, there is now funding from the Ministry of Social Affairs for the first time, which has brought the project to the federal level. In addition, there is also an exchange with other broadcasters or producers who deal with the topic of care at other free radios, such as Freirad, FRO or Radiofabrik.

5mcc - FiveMinutesClimateChance is a five-minute science podcast broadcasted on Radio Orange 94.0 as well as on other community radios (Freies Radio Freistadt, Radiofabrik). In addition, 5mcc is published as a podcast on various podcast platforms (Spotify, Apple Podcast). So far, about 110 broadcasts have been produced and about 80 broadcasts have been published. In terms of content, only science-based information is published. The main goal is to make the topic of climate change and climate protection tangible for everyone. The information should be low-threshold. Most of the broadcasts are humorously prepared and radio play-heavy and often conducted in a dialogue between two people. However, there are also programmes where scientists or initiatives (e. g.

Fridays for Future) are interviewed. The producers of the series want to reach people who have not yet dealt with the topic. People are blocked by the disaster scenarios conveyed by the media. Here they are to be animated by short, low-threshold and humorous information to deal with the topic. From the point of view of the producers, there is a need for basic awareness, knowledge and understanding of the topic among the population, so that politics can also implement the necessary measures against the climate crisis. It is not possible to trace who is reached via broadcasting on the radio. However, through the publication on various podcast platforms, it is mainly the podcast generation between the ages of 20 and 35 that is addressed. It is a challenge to get out of this bubble a little bit, which probably needs more time and financial resources.

In the context of the broadcasting series there were again and again co-operation with various initiatives like the climatic people's initiative, the Scientists for Future or flip, a federation of journalists those Greenwashing with enterprises uncover. In 2021, the 5mcc series won the Austrian Environmental Journalism Award. The producers repeatedly receive requests from institutions that want to convey marketing for their concerns. Corresponding requests are rejected for journalistic reasons. Johanna Lehner emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of the production team. Behind the common interest in the topic and in science communication are different backgrounds in the education of the respective editors. For example, the producers studied environmental sciences, geography, physics, communication sciences or bioresource management. In addition, about half of the production team has previously been active in various community radios. This interdisciplinarity is also an advantage in the internal feedback process and the low-threshold preparation of the content.

What are the obstacles to providing good PH coverage?

In addition to the scientific perspective at **eingSCHENKt**, it is currently being considered whether a greater emphasis should be placed on the perspective of those affected by health and or social issues. Those affected are experts in their own lives to the same extent as scientists are. One challenge is to position the programme differently and to relaunch it in this direction. Another challenge is the setting, the framework that is given in the programme. The conversation always takes place in a bar (Beisl), which looks too much like a coffee house to Schenk. That's fine, he says, but the setting plays a role in terms of the audience's background. According to Martin Schenk, we generally have to think about settings in terms of the community. What are the signals that are sent out, which world is presented to me and where do I feel represented as a viewer? In addition, there are also financial bottlenecks at the city newspaper Augustin. It had to cut hours for the radio broadcast. Many of the television tasks are taken over by Okto, which in turn is struggling with financial bottlenecks of its own. As in 2022, the city of Vienna cut their fundings for Okto.

Andre Ewers emphasizes the need for very good content preparation for each episode of **Fokus Pflege**. He is also interested in illuminating the background of the guests, asking critical questions and thus increasing the proportion of discussion in the programmes. This is currently still too low for him. The goal is to

make a live broadcast in the near future, in which listeners can contribute their opinions. So far, the broadcasts have been pre-recorded. Audience participation and feedback from the community are an important issue. Feedback is currently limited to the click-through rate of the on-demand broadcasts. At the moment, the broadcast is more of a one-man show. Andre Ewers is planning to bring someone else on board, as he believes it would be wise to involve a woman more in the design of the show in view of the nursing profession.

For the project **Pflegestützpunkt**, challenges can be found in the mobilization of nursing staff, especially when it comes to speaking on the radio. It is not so much a question of whether they say something critical on the air, but rather of the obligatory observance of their official channels. Some speak anonymously, but this is always agreed upon in advance in the interest of all parties involved. Furthermore, it is often difficult to involve some rather rigid institutions in the extended area of nursing responsibility in the project.

Johanna Lehner of **5mcc – 5MinutesClimateChance** is claiming that the support of Radio Orange 94.0 has been great, e. g. in using their premises and resources. It is extremely valuable and motivating to have community media as institutions and structures in the background. Since the beginning of the series, the producers' lives have changed. In the beginning, a lot of the work was done in their free time, but after graduation and professional commitments, there is a lack of time resources. We are currently considering applying for funding to expand the production team through employment. We are considering paying someone to edit the audio, as this is very time-consuming. With more financial resources, it would also be possible to promote the series more intensively and to increase interaction with listeners. This would allow the project to be promoted more to the outside world.

As with volunteer initiatives, the planet's resources are limited and good solutions must be found for the problems. It is not the goal to earn money with the project, however, the editors are interested in a slow development. That fits also to the topic health, finally honorary commitment should give one actually always strength and not take strength. This is certainly an issue in many volunteer initiatives and community media.

How could the challenges be met, and the good examples replicated?

The report **COMMUNITY MEDIA - contributions to citizens' participation** by the Council of Europe outlines significant challenges the community media sector has to deal with. For instance, there is a lack of formal recognition as a distinct third media sector beside public service and private broadcasting. The other challenges the report reflects on are also present in our case stories, like a lack of funding or unfeasible conditional funding or a lack of formal recognition of the volunteer workforce. These challenges make it hard for community media broadcasting to achieve sustainability and remain relevant and reachable for the

audience. **The report also offers recommendations to reply to these challenges:**[58]

- Recognition of community media as a legitimate third sector media in legislation;
- Creation of a favourable policy environment for community media's contribution to social cohesion;
- Allocation of reliable funding and/or re-evaluation of provisory funding; ensuring transparency and sustainability in funding models and the operational autonomy of community media;
- A formal recognition of volunteer engagement;
- Recognition of community media's contribution to developing media literacy; establishment of frameworks conducive to the development of media literacy skills;
- Support for local anchorage of community media and their activities;
- Establishment of impact evaluation methods and measurable standards towards recognition of community media's existing and potential contribution to public value.

In the study **Wirkungsradios** best practices were developed that could encourage the involvement and participation of volunteers. **These best practices include:**[59]

- ensuring that volunteers can experience media production as a rewarding (and fun) activity – people who are actively involved and enthusiastic about community media are the best multipliers and communicators for the projects;
- experimenting with communication on different channels, prioritising direct and personal communication with people in the region;
- providing a 'living room' for meetings and dialogue, and enabling interventions in public spaces (pedestrian streets, schools);
- involving the local communities and institutions in programme production, make them experience the power of community media;
- working with role models/personalities who are respected and trusted in the region (people who are socially engaged, independent and responsible);

58 Council of Europe 2022

59 Verein Freies Radio B138 et al 2016, taken from Council of Europe 2022

- looking for topics which are local/regional, but also have a supra-regional relevance; tackle difficult global topics, which people tend to feel disconnected from, such as the financial world;
- providing a platform for connections to educational and professional opportunities in the region.

These recommendations and best practices need resources and funding in the background. Even if the situation therefore in Austria is quite good in comparison to other countries, it still lacks in comparison to the funding private-commercial media is getting. Another important aspect for programmes on Public Health is to strengthen and expand cooperations and projects between community media and institutions dealing with Public Health.

3. Recommendations

Community media are by their design and structure an important link between public health guidance and the community. Community media are acting locally and use horizontal structures of production. They allow people to create their own means of cultural expression, news, information and dialogue. Community media broadcasters, who act as volunteers most of the time, develop media skills as well as social skills. Community media are not only a tool of communication for people They are also a place where people meet, exchange and debate at a community level. They are hubs for sharing information and knowledge and have an impact to public decision-making. The Council of Europe sees community media as an indicator of a healthy democratic society, whose mission lies in their independent and participatory nature.[60]

The mediation of Media and Information Literacy is present at many levels. People learn technical and editorial skills and get to know how audio or video content is being produced. Media and Information Literacy is also taught at a critical and reflective level in Austrian community media. It is necessary to expand this offer and also to focus more on the topics of health literacy and science communication. In addition, cooperation and collaboration between public health institutions and community media must be expanded. The case stories and examples presented here have shown that health institutions and their experts have an interest in bringing scientifically profound information to the population. And that there are already several activities implemented which could be enlarged. The diverse field of broadcasters and their audience is an advantage of community media, in terms of media and health literacy people are reachable that in other settings can't be reached.

As mentioned above, more cooperation and exchange need resources as well. Also, to support people from health organisations and institutions to help and support implementing their programme. This could mean that experienced staff is giving technical support to people at their live broadcasts. As this is already

60 Council of Europe 2022

happening in Austrian community media it could easily be extended with more personal staff resources.

Case stories have shown that it is important for both experts and people concerned by health issues to speak about the topic. Public speaking in terms of people concerned need a safe space, which community media provide. In terms of organisations and institutions it is sometimes difficult when it becomes to speak about issues related to people's profession, e. g. it is sometimes not clear what they are allowed to say. How can we implement and support a culture of public speaking and strengthen the discourse about issues we are all concerned of? An exchange of experiences how to deal with issues like that would be helpful. As community media in Austria having no commercial interest this could be beneficial for a neutral public discourse.

Community media are places of social dialog. There is a fundamental need to strengthen this role. How do we deal with the distrust of traditional media and scientific findings? The pandemic has shown us societal challenges here that urgently need such places of dialog. Due to the fact that community media bring together people from different age groups, different educational backgrounds and different origins, there is great potential here in terms of future public health-related problems. Coming together and talking to each other - a principle that is already lived out in community media. This seems to be very important in an increasingly polarized society.

As a basis for effective community media programming, aspects to be included in a 2-day workshop with community media broadcasters and community representatives could be:

- First it is to be determined if the workshops should be for people concerned by health issues or experts talking about these issues. Of course, it would be fruitful to combine it somehow.
- A goal of the workshop is to facilitate cooperation and exchange between existing programmes on Public Health.
- Another aspect could be how to implement appropriate feedback culture in the process of working with volunteers?
- A focus on health literacy and science communication and how to present these topics in media programmes would be interesting. Also, to work on practical skills how to deal with Disinformation on health-related topics. Giving an overview on the concept of constructive journalism could also be an issue.

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Interviews

Andre Ewers is a nursing scientist, specialist nurse for anaesthesia and intensive care, coordinator of clinical nursing science and nursing research at the University

Hospital Salzburg. He is host of the monthly radio programme Fokus Pflege (Focus Care) at Salzburg's Community Radio Radiofabrik.
Fokus Pflege: mehttps://radiofabrik.at/programme/sendungen/sendungen-von-a-z/fokus-pflege/

Johanna Lehner is a member of the production team of the radio programme and podcast 5mcc - FünfMinutenClimateChance (FiveMinutesClimateChance), broadcasted at Radio Orange 94.0. She studied geography and worked in the media projects Luksuz Produkcija (SLO) and Women on Air (Radio Orange 94.0). Currently she is an editor for the online magazine Nachhaltigkeit. Neu denken (Rethink Sustainability) and engaged in the concept of constructive journalism.
5mcc: https://5mcc.at/

Martin Schenk is a social expert and psychologist as well as deputy director of Diakonie Austria and co-founder of the Poverty Conference. His focus is on welfare policy, health, children/youth and integration. Martin Schenk is co-initiator of numerous social initiatives: Hunger for Art and Culture (culture for people without money), Wiener Spendenparlament (voices against poverty), Verein Hemayat (care for severely traumatized people), Sichtbar Werden (people affected by poverty organize themselves). He hosts the show eingSCHENKt on Viennese community TV Okto.
eingSCHENKt: https://www.okto.tv/de/sendung/eingschenkt

Karin Schuster has been working as a certified health and nursing professional for 30 years. As part of a university journalism master's course, she studied the image of nursing in the media. For the past 12 years, she has been active as a broadcaster at Radio Helsinki (and member of the programme Radio Attac), focusing mainly on activist issues that can be "taken to the streets." Since 2018, she has been leading the project Pflegestützpunkt (Care Support Point) at Radio Helsinki.
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Denmark

1. Overview of the national level discourse on Public Health

WHY is public health communication and health literacy important?

Knowledge and capacities are power. Finding, understanding and using knowledge to sustain and improve individual and public health and welfare is the essence of health literacy*61*, and the foundation for equitable progression of the health status of future generations where we leave no one behind.*62*

For decades health literacy has been on the global agenda as an important individual capacity and determinant of health. However, more and more international research and political calls for action position health literacy responsiveness of organizations, systems and communities as a crucial contribution to the efforts to achieve equity in health and wellbeing.

HOW is health literacy addressed in WHO?

Notably, the report *Health literacy: the Solid Facts* (2013) from WHO in the European Region acknowledged the importance of health literacy in public health and made a strong case for an integrated approach across different settings and sectors such as cities and communities, workplaces and educational settings, organizations and health care settings as well as in media and public communication.

With the *Shanghai Declaration on promoting health in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2016), health literacy was further highlighted as a pillar in health promotion and an important factor in efforts to improve health equity globally together with the principles of good governance and healthy cities and communities. In this declaration Member States committed themselves to recognize health literacy as a critical determinant of health; develop, implement and monitor inter-sectoral national and local strategies for strengthening health literacy; harness the potential of digital technology; and ensure that consumer environments support healthy choices**.**

In this regard, WHO in the European Region presents a framework for implementation of health literacy initiatives through the life course to guide and

61 The concept of 'health literacy' was first introduced in the Danish Health Authority publication "Health Literacy" in 2009.

62 This section is based on an interview with Dr. Bente Mikkelsen, Director of the Division of noncommunicable Diseases and Promoting Health through the Life-course, WHO Regional Office for Europe, as presented in: "GPS – God praksis I folkesundhed. Sundhedskompetence I et strukturelt perspektiv – En vej til lighed i sundhed?" Danish Health Literacy Network. 2020

support policymakers and implementers in Member States in the adoption and implementation of national and subnational, evidence-based, stand-alone or integrated policies or strategies on health literacy. All contributions and initiatives aimed at responding to the commitment in the *Shanghai Declaration* in a national or international context are important in many countries, the potential of integrating health literacy approaches across the health system and beyond is still to be acknowledged and the national needs and resources to be identified.

As a people, we have a common desire for a healthy life course broadly understood, assessed by most of us as something of the most important. How we collaborate on health helps to characterize us as a people, community, and democracy. This has become particularly evident during COVID-19, where prioritizing people's health has both brought people together and separated them. We know a lot about what is healthy for everyone, but less about how we consider the diversity of the people. As humans, we are complex individuals in relation to life situation, personality, motivation and social relationships[63].

1.1 National level discourse on Public Health: what is discussed, what not? Core challenges?

In Denmark, Public Health and whose responsibility it is is widely debated. While there is a growing public sense that the individual needs to take a major part of the responsibility on her own shoulders (70 % agree that the medical doctors can ask for own contribution to become better)[64], it is also expected that the public services are in place to support it. Similarly, patient-oriented prevention in close dialogue with health professionals is expected to be a part of the 'package. This is supported by another study, where 61 % believe that it is the public's responsibility to promote a healthy lifestyle[65]. The Danes generally believe that health is about more than avoiding what is unhealthy. It's also about having a good time and enjoying life. In this survey conducted among more than 5,000 Danes, a growing tendency for the Danes to believe that it can be too much, was however also found. In the survey, 58 % agreed that "society is characterized by health hysteria" - a big increase from a similar survey in 2011, when the figure was 37 percent. The study also points out that there is a dark side to the health debate: Those who appear unhealthy and have unhealthy habits are looked down upon, while society rewards those who live healthily.[66]

In Denmark, as elsewhere, we have seen that that in terms of 'health literacy' there is an increasing polarization in our otherwise relatively homogenous country, with the more marginalised communities coming short in many ways –

63 http://folkesundhed.dk/

64 https://www.berlingske.dk/samfund/vi-vil-selv-medvirke-til-at-blive-raske

65 https://www.tryghed.dk/viden/publikationer/sundhed/mellem-broccoli-og-bajere---forebyggelse-ifoelge-danskerne

66 Ibid.

also in terms of knowledge about healthy lifestyles, Bente Klarlund[67], one of our prominent public health experts, stresses. This furthermore comes through in other areas where growing differences can be found in Denmark including grave ones where groups of children have to be removed from their (biological) parents due to abuse and subsequent risk to their health.

Making healthy choices and finding the way through complex healthcare systems is becoming an increasingly challenging issue in modern societies. People are bombarded with information and misinformation that can be difficult to navigate and relate to. Consequently, this can have an impact on the health of the individual, the use of health services, inequality in health in the population, and the health economy. Health literacy is a determinant of health and therefore important to focus on and prioritise.[68]

WHAT IS Health Literacy?

Health literacy is a combination of personal competencies and resources that enable us to access, understand, appraise, and apply health information to make healthy decisions. One's health literacy can be different in different contexts and depends on the requirements and the complexity that we encounter when managing our health. *Addressing health literacy on a structural level* raises the significance of organisational health literacy, as it deals with the way organisations and systems make information and health services accessible and understandable to people with different levels of health literacy. In every country, the encounter with the healthcare service and healthcare personnel is often characterised by communication problems and misunderstandings due to language and cultural differences, which relate to limited health literacy at both individual and organisational level.[69]

As such health literacy is not only a determinant of health, but also a tool for health promotion[70]!

As we are all different in terms of biology, level of education, social status, etc., the preconditions for being equally health-literate also differ. Some groups in society, such as refugees, are at greater risk of limited health literacy. However, health literacy can be improved throughout life, but it is good to start promoting the personal competencies and resources for health literacy early in life, for example in the educational system and through targeted media engagement. In addition, there is also apolitical responsibility to prioritise health literacy on a structural level, and preferably also as a part of health and welfare policies.

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67 Based on the author's own interview with Bente Klarlund on August 4, 2022. https://www.benteklarlund.dk/

68 (https://nordicwelfare.org/da/publikationer/health-literacy-in-the-nordic-countries-not-only-a-determinant-of-health-but-also-a-tool-for-health-promotion/)

69 Ibid.

70 Folkesundhed - 2 jun 2022

Many determinants help to define our health. One of these is health literacy, which also serves as a mediating and moderating factor of health. All in all, health literacy is an important concept to consider in matters of health and in particular, the health of all people. This concern is met in all the Danish public and private institutions and professional networks working with public health contacted in this research process. All focus on the need to collaborate to contribute to improvements in the health and quality of life of the Danes.

All public health professionals and institutions consulted, point to the need to translate research and knowledge into practice and are on the look-out for partners to contribute to putting public health on the agenda. Only when that happens can the real change for public health be created[71], the National Institute for Public Health stresses in their recent strategy**.** *This could be where community media could play a role?*

Which are the core challenges within Public Health in Denmark?

When you look into the Danish landscape of public health, there are three major health challenges to tackle according to Bjarne Bruun Jensen[72], a former professor at the Danish University of Education and Pedagogy, specializing in environmental and health education: (i) Mental health; (ii) Overweight among children and young people; and (iii) Turning our way of communicating public health and prevention around, seeing those confronted with health challenges as a part of the solution and not just as a part of the problem.

Mental health

Mental health is presently declining in Denmark[73]. What is particularly worrying is the increase in the number of children and young people experiencing poor mental health with potential serious consequences for e.g. their development, schooling and further life course. Mental disorders are very common, and a big one part of the population can expect to experience this at some point in their lives. Mental disorders are of great importance for the individual and the opportunities to live an ordinary life with family, work and leisure interests, and they entail a significant excess mortality.

Nevertheless, people with mental disorders do not, presently, meet with the same level of quality in the health system in Denmark, as people with physical ailments. It is crucial for the possibility of recovery, that you get appropriate treatment and support in time. Today the Danish system is characterized by a lack coherence, insufficient quality and inadequate efforts.

71 National Institute for Public Health https://www.sdu.dk/da/sif/instituttet/vision_og_strategi (2017)

72 Bjarne Bruun Jensen is recognized as one of the country's absolute experts when it comes to children and young people and (public) health.

73 A 10-year plan: “Better mental health and a strengthened effort for people with mental disorders”; The Danish Health Authority, 2022

In September 2022 a broad coalition of political parties in the Danish Parliament entered into a political agreement on a 10-year plan for psychiatry and mental health. The Danish Minister of Health, Magnus Heunicke, said on that occasion:

> *"Mental illness affects almost all families, and there is no doubt that a family member's mental illness takes a toll on the family. For years, the treatment has lagged behind, despite the fact that both patients, relatives and employees have called out. It will take time to correct, and it will require a sustained effort over the next 10 years."*

Two particular areas of urgent challenges in this area standing out is on the one hand children and young people, who were severely hit during the Covid period, where they lost contact with friends, and lost important parts of their social network. Climate problems furthermore is found to seriously trouble many children and young people: *"I fear for my future. If I have one"* was the title of an opinion piece in a major Danish daily 'Politiken' in 2020, written by a 14-year old girl.[74] The article stresses the concerns of young people for the increasing climate problems and not least the lack of political will to do something to solve the problems. This fear is strong in many children and teenagers. The ongoing war in Ukraine further aggravates vulnerable persons' worries.

The second area is the much too frequent burn-out. Our result-focused way of organising our lives including intense work expectancy and the social media's (but not only) constant exposure of perfect lives, make too many people break down with severe symptoms of stress and depression. Either you are challenged by having too much to do, or you feel marginalised, potentially stigmatized, but having too little to do, being outside of the labour marked and possibly isolated socially.

Overweight among children and young people

This challenge of a growing number of children and young people suffering from overweight is global and needs to be considered early on. In Denmark around 20% of children and young people are living with this challenge, with all of the potentially significant health challenges following later on.
"Too many kilos on the body can have both psychological and physical consequences."[75] Children who are overweight experience bullying, teasing and low self-esteem and, in the long term, have a greater risk of developing diseases in adulthood such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and several forms of cancer. In view of that a recent study from the National Institute of Public Health's findings are sad: A total of 19 percent of 14-15-year-olds are overweight or severely overweight. This applies to 14 percent of 6-7-year-olds and 5 percent of very young children aged 6-10 months. The study draws on data from a total of 288,295 children and young people from all over Denmark, who have been measured and weighed by health nurses during home visits for the very young and at school in connection with the enrolment and exit survey. It is a challenge

74 Politiken 26.October 2020 written by the 14-year-old Sofie Risager Villadsen.

75 Professor Lau Caspar Thygesen, author of the quoted report: https://www.sdu.dk/da/sif/ugens_tal/47_2020

that is well known, with reasons so complex that it has been difficult to find appropriate answers to them.

Communicating public health: A solution-focused approach is needed

Turning our way of communicating public health and prevention around, seeing those confronted with health challenges as a part of the solution and not just as a part of the problem is, according to Professor Bjarne Bruun Jensen the way forward: See them as part of the solutions – and not as part of the problem works.

Professor Jensen has taken part in several action research projects to test effective ways of engaging young people 'as the solution' with resulting positive long-term effects. He has worked in Bornholm, Denmark, with a project where children in the kindergarten develop an understanding of the values of vegetables and fruit. They paint the produce and have the paintings posted in the local supermarket. Bringing their parents, proudly, to see their paintings – and buy the greeneries - has proven to have long-term positive health effects[76].

Similarly, Jensen has been engaged in a project with colleagues in Northern Spain where 12 schools were sub-divided into 2 groups: 1 group carried out an intervention for the young children entering school, focusing on the importance of healthy food, inspiring their parents or grandparents in how to make healthy meals. The 6 schools (not in the control group) were followed, and the children gained less weight than the children in the 6 other control-group schools. They were followed up to the average age of 16.

Building on these and other examples of successful positive norms change in the area of public health and increased health literacy, engaging the target group has proven effective. Substituting hopelessness and fear with positive solutions to be implemented with the affected groups is what Professor Jensen has extracted from his research: *"In my mind we could support positive change much more, if we could convince journalists and other communicators to always include possible solutions, when focusing on public health challenges. This can, we know, substitute helplessness and fear with action. But it takes time."*

1.2 Which information gaps do the public experience, and how does the public receive information?

According to the public health professionals and the community media specialists and activists consulted for this study, social imbalances are important also in the area of public health. The parts of the population pro-actively seeking health information are to a large extent those who already know most. The challenge is to reach the segments of the population who don't know and who are not reaching out, themselves. Public health specialists in Denmark talk about 'health literacy' as the core concept when seeking to address these challenges.

Health literacy is related to socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, education, social status and ethnicity, but is also an independent resource and

76 'Forebyggende sundhedsarbejde', Red. Bjarne Bruun Jensen et al. 2022, Munksgaard.

potential risk factor related to health, health practices and use of the health system. Health literacy is developed and used in interaction with the structures and institutions in our environment that relate to health, and the demands and complexity that the individual faces as a result. Therefore, structural efforts among professionals and organizations are absolutely crucial and the focus should be on adapting communication, offers and support options for individual needs.

As Denmark is a highly digitized country, health professionals look to new digital solutions to create new opportunities in the future - but also new challenges. The amount of data that health professionals and citizens have to deal with is growing, and there is increasingly need for technologies that can support and guide citizens' information search, own reporting and monitoring data and informed decision making.

Centre for Health and Digital Media is one of the organisations working to address those challenges is the 'Centre for health and digital media'.[77] Digital media has become a natural part of our lives. We have round-the-clock access to knowledge, entertainment and contact with close and distant friends. The Danish Health Authority gathers information about the importance of our digitalised life for our health and well-being and disseminates this knowledge to decision-makers and citizens.

Trust is a key determinant of Health

According to the 2022 Edelman research examines the pandemic-driven evolution in people's orientation towards health and healthcare and the relationship between trust in the healthcare system and health outcomes[78]. It concludes at the two-year anniversary of the declaration of the Covid-19 pandemic, that after Covid it is clearer than ever that trust is a key determinant of health, central to both individual and public healthcare decisions and that the increasing politicization of public health is undermining trust in healthcare systems across the globe. This has led to persistent inequalities of access and outcomes, fuelled by a widespread infodemic.

Trust: A cornerstone of Danish culture

In 2021, Denmark topped the Transparency International score on *"The perceived levels of public sector corruption in 180 countries/territories around the world" with 88% trust in government not being corrupt"*[79]. In Denmark, trust is the basis of most social interactions as well as business and government. In fact, Danes are considered some of the most trusting people in the world.

Trust comes in different forms. Most people trust their friends and family, but Denmark also benefits from what anthropologists call *a general societal trust*,

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77 https://sst.dk/en/English/Responsibilities-and-tasks/Health-promotion/Focus-areas/Centre-for-Health-and-Digital-Media

78 https://www.edelman.com/trust/22/special-report-trust-in-health

79 https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/denmark

which is the ability to trust people you have never met before. In Denmark, people are assumed to be honest and reliable unless they somehow show that they are not. This societal trust extends to a trust in Danish institutions like the government, police, judiciary, and health services. People who hold power in these positions are trusted to act in the best interest of society, and there is very little corruption.

Why are the Danes so trusting?

Some experts believe that trust is a culturally determined phenomenon built over time. Trust is learned during childhood from parents, teachers, and coaches, lasts for a lifetime, and is passed on from generation to generation[80]. Other anthropologists point to the historical aspect of trust. The Nordic region has been a relatively peaceful nook of Europe, with fewer devastating wars and bloody revolutions than other parts of the continent. This has offered the stability needed to develop a political system in which people trust and support each other.

Trust is an invisible resource in the Danish society. It means fewer social conflicts and crime because it creates a sense of harmony that increases happiness and security. Trust helps avoid many bureaucratic complications and the expenses that arise from increased security and double-checking.

Denmark is among the countries with the lowest level perceived corruption in the public sector. In Transparency International's annual ranking "Perceived Corruption Index", Denmark and New Zealand compete for the title of "least corrupt" year after year. The Danes hand over a large proportion of their personal income in taxes, trusting that those resources will be spent for the benefit of all.

Despite very limited natural resources, Denmark is among the world's most prosperous nations. Well-developed production capacity, solid infrastructure, widespread tax-financed education and innovation are some of the reasons. But there is more to it: according to political science professor Gert Tinggaard Svendsen[81], up to a quarter of Denmark's wealth can be attributed to the high level of trust in Danish society. There is a very high level of volunteer work in the Scandinavian countries compared to the rest of Europe, senior researcher at the Danish Centre for Social Research Torben Fridberg explains[82]. But does that mean people trust each other more?

“The explanation: Historically, the many volunteer organisations in Denmark have been an important part of the democratic project. Whether it is sports teams, building associations, gardening groups, or community boards, volunteer work has been a way for people to “practise democracy” with internal group elections and funding negotiations with local government. The welfare state is based on a high level of trust, and a high level of trust nurtures volunteer work, which again

80 https://denmark.dk/people-and-culture/trust

81 https://omnibus.au.dk/en/archive/show/artikel/gert-tinggaard-svendsen-control-is-good-but-trust-is-cheaper

82 https://www.spcc.pl/node/13045

creates more trust and strengthens the foundation of the welfare state. It is a *"virtuous circle"*, Fridberg says.

Trust and Covid in Denmark

New York times reported in September 2021 that the general Covid restrictions were lifted earlier than in many other countries, still Danes in general chose to behave responsibly, Rebecca Adler-Nissen, Sune Lehmann and Andreas Roepstorff, Danish researchers for the HOPE Project, a study of how democracies cope with Covid-19 report. Their continuing research, which includes over 400,000 questionnaires on Covid-19 behaviours and attitudes in Denmark, six other European countries and the United States, suggests that Denmark's performance up to this point is due to three important factors.

First, Denmark has ***high social and institutional trust*** compared to other countries (90 percent of Danish people say they have high or moderate trust in the country's health authorities), along with a high willingness to be vaccinated. **Second,** Denmark has a ***low degree of political polarization and misinformation***. And **third**, the country embraces ***samfundssind,*** **which loosely translates to "community spirit.** While the country struggles to include every resident in this dictum, especially immigrant populations, Denmark is generally a trusting society with a strong communitarian ethic.

1.3 Challenges - Outlook

Bente Klarlund[83], one of Denmark's prominent public health experts, stresses that there is a great need to structurally address the **rising polarisation of our society in terms of health literacy**, which she sees as one of the greatest challenges. To really see change happen, her experience is that **communication is not enough**. Rather, **legislation** has proven to be an important first step, as it can create a changed infrastructure, a changed framing of the way forward – and then effective communication can come in and support the change needed.

When the politicians in the past have finally dared to propose potentially unpopular legislation, it has been the **basis for real change**. Limiting smoking in Denmark is one such example and it has taken a long time. First of all, the anti-smoke-legislation limited sites where it was allowed to smoke, at the same time as it became common knowledge that it was very unhealthy to smoke in closed rooms with your children, for instance. This was supplemented by a lot of additional documentation - effectively communicated – about the harm of passive smoking, which altogether managed to push the social norms from acceptance towards a strong popular sentiment of disapproval of smoke and smoking, manifesting itself. This Klarlund sees as one of Denmark's most powerful examples of social norms change in the area of public health in Denmark.

83 Based on personal interview with Bente Klarlund on August 4, 2022. Klarlund is one of Denmark's most prominent public health communicators

The challenge often is to make politicians address and act upon unpopular issues. It requires attitude and will. Here journalists could play an important role, helping to set the agenda. Klarlund finds that journalists too often do not take up the obvious health promoting questions when meeting with politicians. During the pandemic, why didn't journalists ask: where will the next pandemic come from? And why didn't they use their platform to highlight the risk that Denmark's intensive agriculture – with mink and pig rearing – poses? Why don't they challenge the politicians and demand answers, making them take on their responsibility?

In health communication it is really important to bring examples close to the life situation of the audiences. It should not be too strange and extreme so the listeners can simply say: "happy this is not happening to me". The media needs to stimulate, inspire with sensemaking issues and examples. As Klarlund says: *"Too much health is not possible, so it would be great if community media also engaged more!"*. And Jensen stressed that public health and health literacy communicators should be challenged to engage their target group in finding solutions – always leaving those with health challenges with action choices.

1.4 Where could CM fill its role as an information provider engaging local communities around PH?

During Covid the community media did not play the same role in Denmark as they did in many other European countries – and beyond. This is because of the incredible 'trust' enjoyed by the national public service broadcaster. People have not had the distrust in information provided by DR so that they would have needed to search for alternative sources. The nine regional public service radios of Denmark's Radio are close to people and people's lives, and enjoy the same high level of trust that their parent national broadcaster does[84].

Based on the research carried out to prepare this report, it is obvious that communication about public health is a very active field of action in Denmark. It takes place on most platforms and through intense engagement by professional capacities within the health sector and on universities. The discrepancies in the access to and decoding of it by different population segments is documented and known, and health communicators are seeking to address this.

In the research it has, however, not been possible to identify examples of community media being used systematically for health literacy. Bjarne Bruun Jensen[85] found the idea compelling, seeing how community media – close to and trusted by its listeners – would be a very good potential communication channel for the kind of action and solution-oriented communication around public health issues. He could see how these media actually have some of the audiences that it has been found very complicated to reach through ordinary health

84 This information is based on Covid 19 research carried out by the former head of Radio in Denmark's Radio, Leif Lønnsman. Shared in a personal interview on 8/8/2022.

85 Jensen is recognized as one of the country's absolute experts when it comes to children and young people and (public) health

communication channels. He regretted that there is not much research on impact and effect of such media coverage in Denmark, unfortunately, but Jensen and Klarlund are both convinced that **community media** could – especially outside of the major cities – be a good place to reach out.

As detailed below, few community media stations in Denmark have regular health programmes in their programming, despite the fact that many of the community media broadcasters, contributing either as volunteers or as a part of a publicly supported part-time rehabilitation occupation actually live with health challenges either mentally or physically. 'Radio/TV Glad' (~TV happy) is formally not a station with a community media not-for-profit broadcasting license but covers the health area. According to their website, Radio/TV Glad is the world's first broadcasting station run by people with cognitive disabilities – some of them supported by professionals and others do not. The main goal of these radio projects is to empower people living with disabilities and to break down stigmas.

2. Overview on national Community Media landscape

Denmark has a well-established community broadcasting sector with 140 non-commercial local radio stations and 38 non-commercial local television stations. Community broadcasting development has taken priority over local commercial broadcasting.

Local radio and - television in Denmark started towards the end of the 1970s with some few cable transmitted television tests, which in 1983 led to the establishment of a period of experiments with local radio and television. The significance of this, should be seen considering Denmark's Radio having held a monopoly in the electronic media up until then, with only limited public access and difficulty for local voices and minority groups to have access to information and communication platforms. After this period of experiments the community media sector was formalised in Danish legislation and has been recognized by national legislation as a separate sector of broadcasting next to public service and commercial broadcasting.

Community radio was put on a permanent footing in 1986, which was extended to include community television in 1987. Local commercial broadcasting followed later, with advertising allowed from 1989 and the establishment of networks allowed from 2003. Local radio and television broadcasting remain predominantly non-commercial, while commercial broadcasting competes, at national and regional level, with the public broadcaster, Denmarks Radio and TV2.

Broadcasting of local radio and television programmes requires a license from a state radio and TV authority[86]. Versatility has been the overarching requirement when licenses are prioritized ensuring a broad reach in terms of topics to be covered and target groups. To get a licence you need to commit to minimally 1 weekly programme matching that same characteristic, and the majority of the

86 Vejledning for tilladelseshavere til ikkekommerciel lokalradio. Radio-og TV nævnet. January 2020. https://slks.dk/tilskud/stamside/tilskud/tilskud-til-lokalradio-2023

broadcasters of the station need to be living in the local area for which the license has been issued. Still, for example certain religious communities simply have to demonstrate that they have a local association in the area, or that local board members are connected to the association that operates the station. Also cable-broadcasters are eligible for support within the current existing subsidy scheme, and the same applies to internet-based local radio or TV.

2.1. Public funding of community media

In 1988 it was decided to introduce a more systematic public support system for the non-commercial local radio and TV, not carrying advertisements[87]. Programming eligible for the state-support needs to be original (not re-broadcast or networked) talk-radio, produced locally with locally relevant content. The state support for local radio and TV was maintained at the same level as during the previous period in the ongoing 5-year media agreements regulating the Danish media policy at the level of the earlier agreement's 52.3 Mio DKK (6.7 USD) for each of the five years in the present 2022-2025 agreement[88]

The number of subsidized local radio stations has varied between 150 and 175 since 2000, while the number of subsidized TV stations increased from 90 to 235 in the same period. At the end of 2021, the State Radio and TV authority informs that Denmark had 139 local non-commercial community radio stations and 36 TV stations, and the Danish Community Media Association informs that today, September 2022, the numbers are 140 community radio stations and 38 TV stations[89]. In comparison, Denmark had at the end of 2021 36 licensed **commercial** TV stations and 43 radio licenses. The commercial radio licenses in some cases cover more than one radio station.

To be granted a community radio license it suffices for an initiative to prove the production of one weekly programme and the involvement of people from the local area. Most community stations are not active on a 24 hours-a-day basis. Many community radios - in some places up to 11 stations - share one frequency.

Each non-commercial local radio and TV station can maximally receive support for up to 15 hours per week. The hourly amount varies from year to year because there is not the same number of subsidized hours every year, some stations close, or are closed for not adhering to the licensing requirements. The pool for radio and TV is the same size every year, 52.3 mio DKK (6.7 mio USD), and after deductions have been made for the administration of the pool, operating subsidies for SAML[90], subsidies for the two nationwide TV stations and special subsidies for the remaining TV stations' operating expenses for Denmark's Radio -

87 Baggrundsrapport til Kulturstyrelsen, By: Per Jauert, Hans---Peter Degn, Anders Taylor Hansen, Katrine Broe Sørensen. February 1, 2013

88 'Medieaftale for 2022-2025'. https://www.regeringen.dk/aktuelt/publikationer-og-aftaletekster/medieaftale-for-2022-2025-den-demokratiske-samtale-skal-styrkes/

89 Personal email correspondence with the head of the SAML secretariat. 28/9/2022st

90 SAML (Sammenslutningen af Medier i Lokalsamfundet) = the Danish community media association: saml.dk

distribute the remaining approximately 45 Mio. DKK (5.8 mio. USD) with 60% for Local TV and 40% for community radio. With the present number of station claiming the present number of eligible transmission hours, this gives a maximum subsidy of DKK 130,000 (16.000 USD) per year for radio, and about DKK 800,000 (103,400 USD) for TV per year.

This limited basis for public funding leads to a situation where many stations are run by volunteers only, with some stations engaging in offering state and municipally funded positions helping unemployed persons or persons living with disabilities into a work life. A win-win programme, providing people with a job in a safe and conducive environment, from where many move into the ordinary labour market afterwards, securing regular staffing of the smaller community stations. These schemes, it has been found in this study, are contributing factors where the stations are on air more hours during a week – a few up to 24/7. In comparison, smaller and more local stations are found to be more successful in involving bigger numbers of volunteers. At a national level there are two umbrella organisations: The Danish Community Media Association (Sammenslutningen af Medier i Lokalsamfundet – SAML) and the Association of Local Radio and TV stations in Denmark, (Sammenslutningen af Lokale Radio og TV stationer – SLRTV).

In terms of expenses linked to running a non-commercial local – community – station, the official regulations for licensees of community media broadcast licenses, states that:

> "Licensees are obliged to enter into a broadcasting cooperative with other licensees in the same broadcasting network. In the broadcasting cooperative, the stations cooperate on any establishment and operation of the transmission network in question." [91]

The Manager of Aarhus-based Radio Bazar, Rui Monteiro (see later) tells, that from his perspective as a broadcaster in the Aarhus Radio Broadcasting Cooperative, each station, broadcasting 15 hours per week, pay 10 DKK per hour of broadcasting (€ 1.30), i.e. slightly more than € 20 per week. The only other cost related to the license is for music royalties, which for many stations amount to around €2.500 per week, Monteiro tells.

Since 1997, Government funding has been provided through earmarking part of the licence fee - a tax paid by all households to support public service broadcasting[92] until the end of last year. From now on public service broadcasting - and community media – are supported through the ordinary taxes[93]. While there may be policy objections in some countries to deploying first the licence fee

91 https://tinyurl.com/bde5tp6a

92 Community media, A good practice Handbook. Compiled and edited by Steve Buckley, UNESCO, 2011

93 Licens bliver til skat: DR's licenskontor lukker efter næsten 100 års arbejde. https://www.dr.dk/om-dr/alletidersdr/licens-bliver-til-skat-drs-licenskontor-lukker-efter-naesten-100-aars-arbejde. Download 28/9/2022

and now taxes in this way, Denmark has demonstrated its use without adverse impact on the main public service broadcaster so far.

Are community media also in Denmark the most trusted media?

In many countries in Europe and around the world, community media are the most trusted sources of information in their local community. This is most of all due to the proximity and the related relevance factor. The broadcasters are local, known, often very respected – and the information provided adjusted to the immediate challenges met in the local environment. This fact often relates directly to the lack of trust in National media[94], which further adds to the confidence in the value of 'our media'.

In Denmark the two national public service broadcasters Denmark's Radio and TV2 are at the top of the trust barometer in Denmark. More than 80 per cent of the population have high trust in the two state-owned stations, which thus top the list of trusted media in Denmark, according to a June 2022 Reuters report. Like several other Nordic media markets Denmark looks relatively healthy, scoring high on trust (4th out of 46 countries), with low media polarisation and second only to Finland for the smallest percentage of people who think news organisations place commercial interests ahead of what's best for society[95].

2.2 Mapping the environment

For our research, the high level of public trust in both government, authorities in general and in the public service media has been described above with some detail. This reality unfolds in the following general national environment.

Country overwiew:[96] Denmark is a small Scandinavian country with around 5.7 million inhabitants covering an area of 42,925 km2.
Languages: The official language is Danish which is closely connected to and mutually intelligible with Swedish and Norwegian.
Minorities: Ethnic minorities constitute 14% of the population and Denmark. The largest group is of Turkish origin (more than 60.000 persons) followed by Syrians (more than 40.000 persons) and Iraqis (32.000 persons). Other large groups consist of citizens from Lebanon, Pakistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran, Somalia, Afghanistan and Vietnam. Denmark is in general a socially and culturally homogeneous society.
Economic situation: Denmark is a financially strong and stable welfare state based on a progressive tax system and principles of equalization. The welfare

94 https://www.poynter.org/ethics-trust/2020/how-to-build-trust-between-your-newsroom-and-a-community-that-has-never-heard-of-you-and-has-zero-reasons-to-trust-you/; https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/intellect/ajms/2019/00000008/00000003/art00001;jsessionid=8gbresgpkgl44.x-ic-live-03; EMPOWERMENT RADIO – Voices building a community. By Birgitte Jallov. EMPOWERHOUSE. 2012

95 https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/denmark

96 This section is taken from the Media Pluralism Monitor: Monitoring Media Pluralism in the Digital Era. Application of the media pluralism monitor in the European Union, Country Report, Denmark 2021.

system is implemented in all areas of public service such as healthcare, education, day and permanent care of children, the elderly, disabled and disadvantaged citizens, pensions and public welfare, flexicurity etc.

Political situation: The political system is a stable parliamentary multi-party system characterized by minority governments and a strong tradition for political cooperation across the parties. Major labour market issues are handled by tripartite negotiations between the government, employers' associations, and unions.

Media Market: Danish media is dominated by private newspapers on the one hand and heavy state involvement in the audio-visual media on the other hand. The media support schemes are comprehensive and media support is distributed in a fair and transparent way. Denmark has not experienced problems with political affiliated businessowners who have taken control over central media outlets and used it for direct or indirect political influence. This is due to the large public service sector and to the tradition of foundation ownership. A main characteristic of the Danish media landscape is the government support for Danish media and cultural production which to a large extent is driven by a political will to support and uphold media in Danish language and media plurality.

Print: The main newspapers reflect the political spectrum and the country's political history. The print readership has declined, but from a relatively higher level compared to other European countries. The major Danish newspapers have all introduced some kind of pay wall for the online content, but none of them have seen online revenue increase to an extent enabling it to replace the income from print. On top of that, they are losing the advertising market to Facebook and Google.

Audio-visual: Audio-visual media is dominated by the state. Two of the largest tv stations - Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) and TV2 - are owned by the state. DR is entirely state funded and is a dominant player in radio and the TV market, as well on the internet. TV2 is based on an advertising and subscription business model and known for its network of regional news stations which receive public service funds.

Digital: The number of native digital media is very high and 85% of Danish internet users use the internet to access news online. Denmark has seen the emergence of newspapers founded as online only; among other Altinget, Zetland, POV, and Watch Medier. The most important online news sites are DR, TV2 and the big newspapers.

COVID-19: The media industry is experiencing major challenges due to terms of lock down in the battle of COVID-19. As businesses close down, so do the budgets for advertising and commercials. Freelancers and the self-employed are severely hit by the COVID-19 crisis. Despite governmental aid packages, 24 percent fear that the corona crisis will shut down their business. Every fourth freelancer has lost at least 80 percent of their income and according to the Danish Journalists' Association, the employment of journalists has decreased during the past year[97].

97 COVID-19 impact on employment of journalists: https://journalistforbundet.dk/nyhed/beskaeftigelse-djklar-med-ekstraindsats

The national legal framework in which community media operate.

Regulatory Environment. There is a political reluctance to regulate the media in Denmark. The general regulation therefore applies to the media, including defamation and privacy rules. There have not yet been any regulatory incentives, specifically supporting online media and pluralism. The outdated but still applicable Media Liability Act[98] does not cover digital news outlets unless the media voluntarily has signed up to the Press Council. As various journalist rights are linked to the Media Liability Act, the fact that the law does not apply to digital media without registration may affect their enjoyment of source protection and other journalistic rights[99].
As mentioned above, broadcasting of local radio and television programmes requires a license from a state radio and TV authority. To get a licence you need to commit to minimally 1 weekly programme matching that same characteristic, and the majority of the broadcasters of the station need to be living in the local area for which the license has been issued (for more details see section 2 above).

The legislation is transparent and clear and presented on the website of the appropriate authority under Denmark's Ministry of Culture – and it is being implemented transparently as indicated in the legislation and its explanatory regulations: (i) The five-year media agreements sets the framework and the funding levels, (ii) the rules for applying for, receiving and maintaining a broadcast license as a non-profit community radio and TV and separately spelled out in simple and clear language[100]; (iii) separate 'Guidance on subsidies for non-commercial radio stations'[101] and TV stations then spells out how to apply for financial support. Sending licences can be applied for twice a year.

Some stations find the regulations too tight and survival in the longer run within the tight regime established in Denmark complicated. The oversight with the limitations in the extent of advertising and the clearly established rules about how to – and how not to – establish sponsorships, does mean that some stations, choosing to violate the rules, will be sentences to, say, four weeks off air.

Profile of the Danish Community Media organisations

In Denmark community media would be translated by the Danish term 'naermedier'. The way the environment has developed since the beginning of the period of experiments with radio and TV in 1983, that term has come to point to the commercial outgrowth from the not-for-profit original community media.

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98 Source: https://www.pressenaevnet.dk/media-liability-act/

99 Media Pluralism Monitor. Denmark Country report. 2021

100 Vejledning for tilladelseshavere til ikkekommerciel lokalradio ; https://slks.dk/tilskud/stamside/tilskud/tilskud-til-lokal-tv-2023

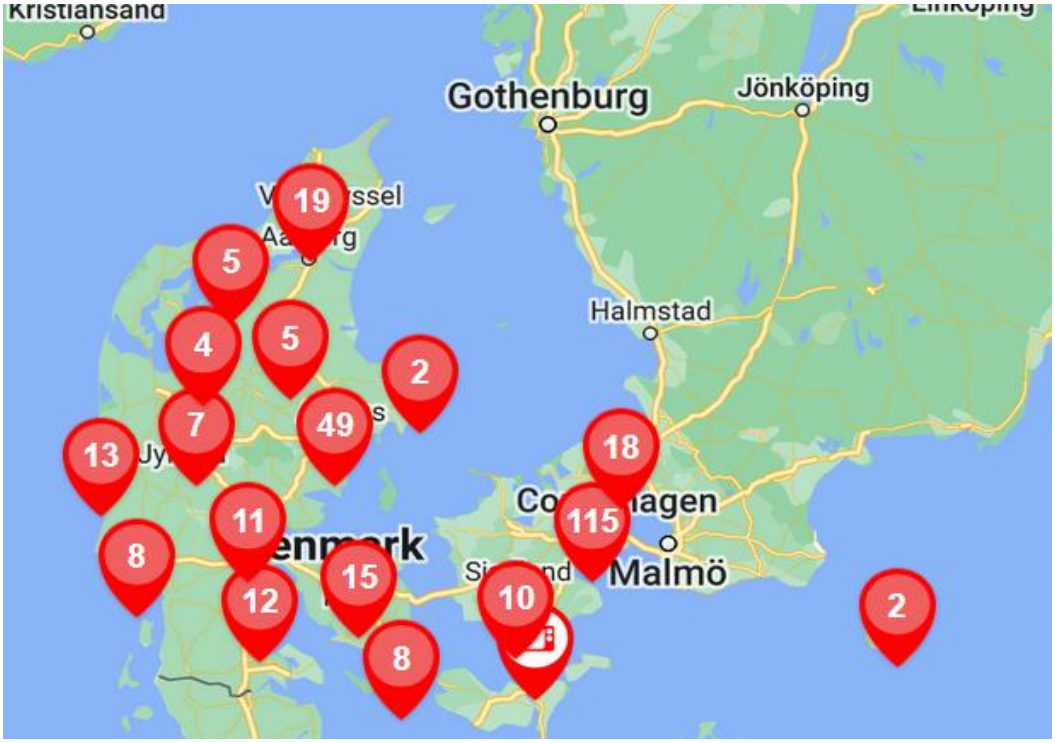
101 https://slks.dk/omraader/medier/tilskud-til-medier

The not-for-profit community owned proximity media, are called local radio and TV stations.

The Danish Community Media Association (Sammenslutningen af Medier i Lokalsamfundet – SAML) is a nationwide umbrella organization for the non-commercial local electronic media. SAML was founded March 10, 2005. Its purpose is to coordinate the activities among the participating national organizations in order to strengthen the conditions of the non-commercial local electronic media as best possible. This includes importantly to strengthen freedom of speech and the local democracy with public service and public access in the communities.

The Association of Local Radio and TV stations in Denmark,
(Sammenslutningen af Lokale Radio og TV stationer – SLRTV) is one of five member associations of the umbrella association SAML described above organising the not-for-profit stations. Its purpose is to support the interests of not-for-profit media in Denmark, and to strengthen the freedom of expression and diversity of the local, regional and national radio and television stations.

SAML informs that today, September 2022, Denmark has **140 non-commmercial community radio stations and 38 local community TV stations** in operation. They are all mapped by the LRTV (Local Radio and TV) internet portal:



https://lrtv.dk/

All interviewed and consulted agree that the late 1980s and early 1990s was the boom period, where the community media movement was still new, and when the engagement in movements gathered large crowds and there was a sense that the community media were our, the civil society's media. Presently quite a number of the non-profit community media are leaning towards more music-

oriented formats and in many realities, it is found to be hard to recruit new volunteer broadcasters.

None of the non-commercial stations have paid staff. The funds received from the state are used for rental of space on transmission towers, maintenance of equipment, electricity, phones and other technical needs. Each station also has to pay royalties for the so protected music. If a station on a non-commercial license broadcasts music in less than 50% of their time, they get a discounted price.

The number of transmission hours by day or week varies widely. Some stations broadcast 24/7, but they are few (see among others Radio Ringkobing profiled hereunder). Most stations cannot with the limited 'running cost' contribution from the state, maintain operations for that many hours, so they share a frequency. Often it is non-commercial stations sharing, but it can also be non-commercial and commercial stations sharing the same frequency. In Denmark's second-largest city, Aarhus, 11 stations for instance share a frequency, having 15 hours of transmission time each. Each station within a shared frequency are independent, autonomous legal entities. The only requirement is that the stations sharing a frequency engage in a 'transmission collaboration' ensuring that the technical and financial operation is functioning to get the signals on to the FM band.

Gitte Thomsen, the head of the SAML secretariat, coordinating the Danish Community Media association (SAML), does not know how many stations have their own, dedicated frequency/channel and how many share. She highlights that she is a one-person secretariat with no opportunity to collect and have such information available. Quite a few stations transmit around 60 hours a week. Recent research underscores what is also known from other European countries – and beyond: good technical quality is fine and appreciated, but solid content with less perfect sound is more important. People are interested in good local programming[102]!

There is still within the community media association and a number of the community stations an ethos focused at engaging the local community, of ensuring new voices on air, and ensuring that the listeners in the range of the 160W transmitters get important local information. The movement is also still seeing themselves and their stations as an important contribution to securing freedom of expression. During the most recent year, it has been found that the smaller and the more local the stations are, the more volunteers they have. This again underscores that local and small is beautiful – and attractive. But for a station to have 10-15 volunteer broadcasters is quite common. With the financial challenges and the rather limited number of volunteers in many stations, however, it is by many experienced as an uphill struggle.

Gitte Thomsen highlights that they have forwarded a series of recommendations for additional grants to focus on innovation and capacity building for the community media movement to become more visible. This would help them

102 Information shared by the SAML head of secretariat Gitte Thomsen in a personal interview on 18/8/2022

increase the awareness of the opportunities the communities – and citizens – have, but are found to not be make the full, potential use of! Ms. Thomsen says that what she terms a 'triopol' is really important, made up by: *"the old, solid, trusted public service broadcasters, who used to be in a monopoly situation; then the second category, the commercial stations 'living off of us'; and then we are here, the third member of the triopol, engaging the listeners to become broadcasters: they are not media experts, but experts of and on our reality. This is really important"*[103], Ms. Thomsen ends.

Stig Hartvig Nielsen, who has been the initiator and lead champion in several community radio stations in Denmark since the early beginning in the 1980s, an active member of SAML and earlier the publisher of a regular community media newsletter, says, that you can broadly talk about **three categories of non-commercial stations in Denmark today**:

- There is a group of rather big, half-way commercialised (informally) stations with a popularity in the local area. They are not officially or fully commercial, but they survive with more paid content than actually condoned by the authorities.
- Others try to get by based on the limited advertising permitted and the accepted sponsorships. In this group you among others find Radio Ringkøbing, Radio Rønde (both of these two, latter, are profiled below), Radio Nibenitten, Folkets Radio (the Radio of the People) (also profiled below), Radio Mælkebøtten (the Dandalion), Radio Klitholm, along with Radio Frederikshavn, Radio Odsherred, Radio Holbæk, and a few more north of and around Copenhagen including Radio Albertslund and Hvidovre Radio.
- Finally, there are some very small stations, some immigrant radios and grassroots stations, especially in Copenhagen. As mentioned above, they are often more successful with recruiting volunteer broadcasters.

Nielsen stresses that there are no audience surveys documenting the actual listenership of the community media in Denmark, but the general impression is that the listeners are made up by a limited, but loyal core – and mostly not the youngest[104].

How are community media reflected in the Media Pluralism Monitor

Community media is in the Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) presented with little distinction between community / local media and regional media. Whereas regional media in Denmark are either (i) the regional public service media: 9 regional stations[105] within Denmark Radio and 8 regional TV stations within the

103 As above

104 Additional Information shared by Leif Lønsman in the interview referred to above.

105 DR has 10 regional radio stations, where two neighbouring stations have shared management. One could therefore in that sense talk of 9 regional stations. All have a radio channel, part of the day producing local news, and most of the day sharing national programmes. Two of the stations also have a TV station,

TV2 network[106]; or (ii) private regional print media houses, community media – called local – have in Denmark distinct legislation, realities and funding, different from regional media.

The MPM however in their 2021 report addresses local/community media, which was not the case in earlier reports. They among others say:

> "Access to media for local/regional communities and for community media (25%) has very good conditions in Denmark. It is worth noting that the concept of community media doesn't exist in Danish legislation. Instead, there is a major focus on local/regional media. This can in part be explained by the homogeneity of the population, as well as the small size of the country."

The Radio and TV Act clearly states that non-commercial and regional radio and tv-station frequencies are only given to those organizations that apply for them (LBK nr 248, 16/03/2019). This is overseen by The Radio and TV Council (Chapter 2, paragraph 3). The PSM TV2 Danmark has several regional stations that are supported by PSM Funds. Like the national media, these regional media are editorially independent from political influence (Blach-Ørsten et al., 2021). In September 2021, it was decided by the Ministry of Culture that non-commercial and local media should receive additional funding for audio-visual news production, as well as to adapt digital business and distribution models (Ritzau, 2022).

There is a political incentive to strengthen local perspectives that go against the national media's primary focus on news from Denmark's largest cities, such as København, Aarhus, Aalborg and Odense. Emphasis in recent subsidy distribution has also been to expand the innovation-focused government fund "Innovationspuljen" and give more access to funding to local and regional organisations. It is worth noting that in the new initiatives to strengthen local and regional media, it has been decided to grow their subsidies at the cost of subsidies originally meant for national media corporations (Ministry of the Interior and Housing, 2021)."

Are community media referring to MIL in their practical work?

The MPM[107] reports that in their research Media Literacy (3%) is one of the lowest risk indicators in the study. To properly assess this indicator, the country team has found it necessary to translate the concept of Media Literacy to a very, very similar concept primarily used in Denmark, Digital Literacy (Digital Dannelse). A report from 2015 (Stald et al.) tried to contextualize the concept for the Danish educational system. However, the concept of Media Literacy (translated to Mediekundskab, i.e. knowledge of media) never caught on. Instead,

producing local programmes to DR's national programmes. https://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/DR%27s_regionale_afdelinger

106 https://omtv2.tv2.dk/fakta/organisation/tv-2-regionerne/

107 Media Pluralism Monitor. Denmark Country report. 2021

the concept of Digital Literacy, which focusses on the competencies of users of digital media, both from a technical and critical perspective, has become a major lightning rod for Danish education and in the rest of Scandinavia (Bundsgaard, 2017; Gran, 2018). It has been operationalized in Denmark by prominent researchers to discuss issues of digital democracy, cyberbullying, digital pedagogics and citizenship[108].

While there are no explicit policies on digital literacy in the educational curriculum, it is represented in- and outside of formal educational context in a number of ways. It has come to the forefront of political and social life due to high profile cases of underage girls having their pictures shared online without their consent (Ritzau, 2020).

Media literacy and information search in general is covered in the the Ministry of Children and Education (Børne og Uddannelses Ministeriet) obligatory guidelines for grammar schools (History) and high schools (Social Science). Several research projects have focused on how to develop up-to-date curricula for Digital Dannelse/Education in high schools. December 2021, 5 parties from across parliament agreed to spend 52,5mio. kroner (about 7mio EUR) on projects to strengthen digital literacy among children and adolescents[109]. Digital Literacy is still not on the teacher's curriculum, but several NGO's provide educational materials.

Protection against illegal and harmful speech and online harassment

A few problems surrounding **Protection against illegal and harmful speech (17%)** have been identified[110]. While Denmark has concrete legislation against hate speech in its Penal Code (LBK nr 1650, 17/11/2020: paragraph 266-267), it doesn't explicitly mention online contexts. This makes it very difficult to pursue hate speech uttered on social media. In a report by the Free Speech Commission (which is under the Ministry of Justice), it is recommended not to create legislation that directly targets online contexts, i.e., social media. The reason for this is that it will limit freedom of speech online and because the commission fears that a wave of legislation will make social networking sites introduce content filters that might overreach their purpose.

The same report makes an assessment of the threat disinformation poses in a Danish context. While there is a growing field of research on disinformation in Denmark, there is still little data on the scale and impact of disinformation[111]. The

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108 Mehlsen, C., & Hendricks, V. F. (2018). Hvordan bliver vi digitalt dannede?. Informations Forlag; Drotner, K. (2018). Hvad er digital dannelse og hvordan fremmer skolen den. Unge Pædagoger Årg, 79, 6-14; Svendsen, A. M., & Svendsen, J. T. (2021) "Digital directions: Curricular goals relating to digital literacy and digital competences in the Gymnasium (stx) in Denmark". Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy, 16(1), 6-20.

109 Ministry of Education, 2021

110 This desription is based on the MPM's reference to this area.

111 Mayerhöffer, E. (2021). How do Danish right-wing alternative media position themselves against the mainstream? Advancing the study of alternative media structure and content. Journalism Studies, 22(2), 119-136. Kalsnes, B., Falasca, K., &, Kammer, A. (2021). "Scandinavian political journalism in a time of fake news and disinformation". In E. Skogerbø, Ø. Ihlen, N. N. Kristensen, & L. Nord (Eds.), Power, communication, and politics

Free Speech Commission[112] concludes that disinformation currently isn't a cause for concern, since occurrences have been few and institutional safeguards have been ready to combat them (p. 47). They are still concerned for the future, since France and Germany have been shaken more severely by disinformation campaigns.

Training of community media on MIL

Several of the bigger community media in Denmark consider all their work to include the community in their work, provide introductory training courses, and their ongoing reminder to check sources and maintain ethics high, Media and Information Literacy.

Several smaller community radio stations interviewed were surprised about the question, stressing that whereas they don't have a sufficient volume of new volunteers joining, the more experienced broadcasters sit with the new recruits and go through how to function at the station, stressing the MIL role that the station has both implicitly in terms of the production of programmes, but also explicitly in the provision of programme components – where relevant – informing the listeners about mis- and disinformation within the thematic area of the programme.

2.3 What is Community Media's role and impact

Community Media and radio programmes involved in the study

RADIO BAZAAR (http://www.radiohusetaarhus.dk/radio-bazar.html**)** has been a part of the local radio scene in Denmark's second biggest city of Aarhus since 2005. Radio Bazaar had 20 volunteer broadcasters (Vietnamese, Turkish, Iranian, Syrian, Somali). The station is based close to the Gellerup Housing Estate, which is the home of more than 50 ethnic groups. The direction of Radio Bazaar continually encourages people of the area to come and use the radio – get a voice. They have had a special focus on getting women on board and had for a period a Somali women's editorial group. It is, however, not presently active. The station broadcasts 15 hours radio per week and 2 hours TV per week. The TV has some 15-20.000 regular viewers, and the radio station has at least 1.000 listeners per ethnically profiled programme.

Financially Radio Bazaar receives the state support which is DKK 130.000 (€17.500) per year and for TV DKK 800.000 (€107.500), as this is much more expensive to operate. Besides from the volunteer broadcasters the station has an agreement with the municipality of Aarhus and has on average 5 persons at the radio station in 3-months job-training or 'flex jobs' with variable hours, depending upon the ability by the individual – and 5 more in the other media entities of the Radio House. This is a win-win: it provides persons in a marginal relation with the

in the Nordic countries (pp. 283–304). Gothenburg: Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855299-14

112 The Free Speech Commission (2020)

labour market, valuable experience, and it ensure a core of regular staff of the station and the other media in the house.

Radio Bazar is a part of 'Aarhus Global Media' which has a special interest in community, citizenship, and culture-meetings, running the Aarhus 'Radio House', where Radio Bazaar is also based. Their regular programmes include news and current affairs – with a focus on the local area, but not only. The station has a variety of cultural programmes with special focus on different parts of the world and in different languages – at the time of carrying out the interview, the station was carrying five regular languages. They also have programmes focusing on music, films, sports, and the environment. They share facilities and collaborate with the other members of 'Aarhus Global Media'. Radio Bazaar wishes to strengthen (i) freedom of expression and the local democracy; (ii) public service and public access in the community; (iii) an inclusive, rich and diverse media reality in Aarhus and surroundings; (iv) democratization and civic education; and (v) media for ethnic minorities locally and regionally.

HEALTH PROGRAMMES ON RADIO BAZAAR

Radio Bazaar has had an intense wish to have a strong health programme, as 'health' makes up a significant budget post in the public budgets, but also very much to reach the station's many nationalities broadcasting and listening. The radio finds that it has a good connection with both the public health experts of the University and the medical schools in the city. But they have not managed to get them interested in collaborating for an ongoing programme series – and the stations would like to have health experts on board. The result is that the station doesn't have a health series, but covers health – in its broadest sense, when some special occasion calls for it as part of the current affairs programming.

To ensure proper health literacy for especially the immigrant women, the station covers as much information it can within its general ethnic, non-Danish language programming. One area they continually focus on is to ensure proper information about the locally available health services, including holistic 'health houses' with many kinds of specializations covered. They furthermore cover climate and environment as well as the healthy food choices including ecology.

During the Corona pandemic Radio Bazaar collaborated with the Aarhus municipality to cover the core health related information on healthy behaviour, how to protect yourself and your family, and what to do to prevent the spread of the virus. The station did not develop any independent journalistic coverage but ensured that the basic information would be regularly spared in the station's five languages. The Municipality regularly uses the station like this. The stations does not receive payment for such coverage, but it means that they have easy access and good collaboration with the authorities, when they need information.

RADIO RINGKOBING (https://www.radioringkobing.dk/**)** went on air in February 1987 with only a few weekly hours of transmission. Today they are on air 24/7, with

programmed music and retransmission of programmes from 8 o'clock in the evening till 6 in the morning. The station has 35 local volunteer broadcasters of which some are at the station every day, others come to take part in the preparation and broadcast of special programmes. One of the regulars is an 85-year-old lady insisting to regularly scrub the floors of the big Radio House, chatting away while she does it. The station has a full-time station manager, in charge of all the boring stuff, as he expresses it himself. Quite a few of Radio Ringkobing's volunteers live with health problems and disabilities. Many come voluntarily, others are placed in 3-months job-training by the municipality, which has realised that the station is a good place for people 'hit by life': the atmosphere is friendly, easy-going, and the work is exciting. The station has 800 members. For a household the annual membership payment is DKK 180 (€24), and for pensioners DKK 130 (€17).

The station is an important and deeply integrated part of the local community (Denmark's best community radio, the station manager laughingly said), taking part in all local events, and always ready to cover the life of the local associations and institutions. They strive to always approach stories in a positive, solution-oriented manner, respectful and empathetic of the ordinary people they interview. This also means that their target audience is very faithful. In the most recent audience survey carried out 4-5 years ago for all the zip-codes of the area the station covers[113], they found that 60-80% of the mature part of the population (50+) listen at least once a week to the station. During Covid they revived their original 'Radio Bingo', where people can buy plates to play. This is a weekly event and hugely popular – also post-Covid.

HEALTH PROGRAMMES ON RADIO RINGKOBING

The radio does not find that it has the calibre of broadcasters to prepare regular, ongoing health programmes, and they find that the Danish national and regional public service broadcasters – radio and TV, cover this area with such a high level of quality, integrity and relevance, that the station has not felt that its audience had any un-met health information needs that ought to be covered by their local radio.

Still, however, they usually have series of brief spot-on health information programmes. Presently they have a chiropractor who prepares a weekly 15-minute programme about how to protect your back, your neck, your knees – in ordinary Danish with no doctor-jargon. Many listeners really appreciate this, having often experienced visiting the family doctor and not ***really*** understanding all that was said. Before the chiropractor, the station had a physiotherapist who presented weekly programmes about some of the ordinary health challenges that the population meets.

Besides from these programmes brought to the audience by specialists, the station often brings portrait programmes where people from the

113 The station had distributed 2000 questionnaires within their coverage area and received more than 1000 back. This, according to the capable people helping them with this, made the survey as valid as those made by Gallup.

community, who have been through a special health challenge tells about it, the processes and how the got through it. These programmes are very popular and provide the human face to health and healing processes.

RADIO RONDE (https://www.sdlr.dk/**)** went on air 35 years ago, in 1987 on a wave of excitement. They were on air 2 hours per day. Now they share the channel with three other stations: a commercial radio 'Radio Alfa', 'Radio Djursland' and 'Kanal 3'. Radio Ronde transmits 42 hours per week and cover the whole area of Djursland with six transmitters and 6 frequencies, and they broadcast on DAB+. The station has 18 volunteer broadcasters of which 10 are regulars and the others come from time to time. The station has a part-time station manager. Earlier they had weekly editorial meetings where they together developed the individual programmes, the capacity of the broadcasters and the profile of the station. Now they are quite autonomous and often work individually: they know when their programme is on, they come, they do it and go home. Once very three months all active broadcasters meet to evaluate and plan.

In terms of listeners, they have no recent audience survey, but estimate that with their frequencies and DAB+ they cover about 10% of the population of the area, which would be 8-10.000 listeners on a weekly basis. On their call-in programmes there are around 40-50 callers every week – often the same, but it is the same in all comparable community radio stations in Denmark. It depends very much on the programme and the host. The station is present in all local events, including culture.

The station covers the local stories that no-one else covers: all the local political, social, cultural and economic stories. There is a great interest in programme from the municipal meetings and interview programmes with the mayor or some of the city council members. They also bring a weekly religious service – every week from a different church.

HEALTH PROGRAMMES ON RADIO RONDE

In terms of health programmes, Radio Ronde does not have anyone at the station who could produce journalistically investigative health programmes. But they often include information about activities in their community related to training courses, speeches and events about healthy habits in areas such as obesity, smoking, unhealthy alcohol habits, drugs, exercise etc. The station is very meticulous to remember to remind the audience, when such activities take place.

One of the broadcasters produce 10-15 minute health spots once a week based on simple internet search. They consider it a kind of 'public service announcements'. When talking about health issues, or other issues that could be considered stigmatizing, they are aware that those who need this information most, might just close off unless it is very carefully – and well – presented. One thing they find that they are quite successful with is using humour. When people laugh, they open their soul and mind and are, in view of the station, more ready to take the message onboard.

FOLKETS RADIO (http://www.folketsradio.dk/**)** (The people's radio) went on air April 1st, 1991. The station has 10-12 volunteer broadcasters and are on air from 12:00 – 17:00 six days a week – no broadcast on Sundays. The station's manager is also the head of the secretariat of SAML, the Danish association of community media. She is therefore full time, but with shared attention.

The station provides in-depth coverage of local issues including debates with the city council members, they cover the history and tradition of the city of Aalborg, where they are situated (Denmark's 4th biggest city), the produce company portraits of business activities in town, and cover all major events of the city's associations, civil society and institutions.

The core objective of 'Folkets Radio' is secure a public access channel, where the community can voice their concerns and together search for answers to some of the challenges in Aalborg. In terms of an audience, they don't have any reliable recent records, but based on reactions from listeners, from the references to their stations in local debates and in the unions and other civil society organisations, the station has a firm belief that it is of importance locally. The debates they organise on a weekly basis with the politicians and other influential persons in town, has an important following, they know.

> **HEALTH PROGRAMMES in FOLKETS RADIO**
>
> The station manager of Folkets Radio stresses that in Denmark, it is really not the community media's ideal role to cover public health. This is done excellently – and trusted – by the public media: Denmark's Radio and TV2 national and regional.
>
> She stresses that covering public health challenges through lifestyle programmes and 'reality TV' is really not the way to counter the health challenges. They are, according to her, based in the inequalities in society: obesity, smoking, depression, this is really conditions caused by social challenges, and will not be solved by 'running around on TV in a muddy forest'. She is appalled by the way that commercial – and even sometimes public service - media expose societal and social challenges as individual problems.

RADIO/TV GLAD (https://www.tv-glad.dk/**)** is **not** a community media platform[114] and has a commercial license – also when its core objective is to provide voices to a segment of the Danish population rarely heard: persons with cognitive challenges. The station started in 1999 as the world's first local TV-station run by people living with disabilities. Today they are a modern media house with many different offerings – also beyond the media area - owned by a foundation. They started with a small handful of volunteers and a few employees in premises at Vesterbro[115] Cultural Center. Since then, the development has been impressive.

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114 Radio/TV Glad is included here, exceptionally, as their special focus is on a high priority public health area.

115 a lively quarter of Copenhagen, the Danish capital

The station produces radio broadcasts 24/7 and only half an hour weekly flow-TV (as required to get a TV license) but uploads longer and shorter videos regularly. Currently Radio/TV Glad produces features which are published on a wide range of platforms and reaches many of their target groups and they have production hubs and frequency allocations in five different locations all over Denmark. On the station only employed persons broadcast. They have no volunteers. They are employed on many different kinds of contracts, some have ordinary full time employments, others are working with support from the public authorities on part time or as pre-period-self-funded-pensioners.

The stations works with 3 legs and priorities: Programmes focusing upon the political challenges for their target group, Culture and Lifestyle – but at the core of all is their aim to give people with disabilities a voice in society, visibility, and to be a platform for a good, respectful and productive social debate.

The station's audience includes: 40.000 followers on Facebook, 2.752 on Instagram. They have no audience surveys to document TV and radio audience sizes, but based on their listener/viewer feedback, they have a feeling that they have an important regular following.

Radio/TV Glad is part of the registered social economic enterprise 'Glad Fonden' (The Glad / Happy Foundation). It consists of the departments Design, Glad Food & Service, Glad Business, Glad Vocational School, Glad Zoo, Glad Theatre, and a number of projects, amounting to a total of 334 employees, half of whom are employed on special terms based on the challenges they live with.

HEALTH PROGRAMMES on RADIO/TV GLAD

Radio/TV Glad has a very good experience with a good laugh. Their broadcasters – most living with a cognitive disability - have a lot of self-irony. The station's experience is that through this, they manage to fight a lot of stigma, and work towards a feeling of community.

Ion terms of reflections on effective presentation formats, their experience is that it depends on who you talk to. With young people they use humour. And the personal life-stories, where there is something at stake, this they direct at the slightly older target group between 35 and 60.

The stations's view of 'Public health' is that the thematic is huge. In their particular target group both mental health (obviously), but also obesity is a huge challenge! Who do you talk to? If a community radio could cover this, it would be ideal!

2.4 Good MIL and PH practice as found in the case stories

How is good PH coverage organised and presented?

In the Danish context, the community media have limited ongoing, regular public health programming in their stations. The reason given by all community media broadcasters and managers; by media researchers; and by public health professionals alike, is that the Danish public media – national and regional – enjoy

such a high level of trust and have regular, well produced public health programmes, covering the many perspectives on health in general.

The manager of the station working mostly with ethnic programming in other languages than Danish, Radio Bazaar, stressed had he and they had really wanted to have strong public health programming on the station, but had not managed to motivate the collaboration partners the station has among public health researchers and medical specialists.

In the Danish Community Media environment with volunteer broadcasters being the regulars in the stations, all the stations have some short weekly information programmes of a 10-15 minute duration. Some of the stations furthermore reinforce ongoing local public health initiatives such as speeches, training courses, collective exercise programmes and the like by providing regular 'public service announcements' about it. The stations experiment with finding ways of bringing about health information in ways, where the listeners do not simply get bored or annoyed at 'raised fingers' and change the channel they are listening to. Using humour to avoid stigmatization is one such approach found effective.

In terms of effective public health coverage in general, public health specialists and public health communicators interviewed agree that media play an important role to challenge norms and traditions - also in terms of healthy living. Bente Klarlund herself has been quite systematic and strategic in her communication efforts, doing presentations, talks in libraries and culture houses, recognizing that the participants here who pro-actively seek such information, already know a lot. She therefore also visits factories and other workplaces. This have given her the opportunity to reach many more – and different kinds of - people. Furthermore, she takes part in lifestyle programmes, which are watched by different and traditionally hard-to-reach target groups, and she has taken part in influencer-shows together with Denmark's prime minister, again trying to open the eyes of those who don't know. As presented above, Bjarne Bruun Jensen, health pedagogue and public health specialist, recommends to begin such work with children and to design ongoing programmes. The changes needed and desired in this area take – like all social norms change work – long to work.

Which are the characteristics?

Presently, in Denmark, there is limited coverage of public health in community media. These local not-for-profit media identify with the local area where they live, from where their broadcasters come and about which the report. The majority of the community media interviewed find that the public media in Denmark cover the – often complex – health issues excellently, their audiences trust the content of these programmes and use them, and they, the community media, with volunteer broadcasters and no budgets, will focus on the day-to-day issues of their community, which they find they can do well. The stations consider this a sensemaking role-division in view of all – including their community's interests and information needs.

One of the stations met, Radio Bazaar based in Aarhus, has actually striven to introduce public health programmes, with a focus on health challenges met by their large group of ethnic audiences. This has so far not worked.

Despite this general scenario of the broad area of public health coverage, all stations have considered regular and many-times-a-day sharing of core Covid protection and prevention messages a natural and important part of their public service obligations. This has been 'cool facts' based on the information provided by the Danish health authorities.

What are the obstacles to providing good PH coverage?

The main obstacle highlighted by all the people interviewed refers to the difficulty of making a high-quality production in a voluntary-based radio station, whose members run these programmes altruistically and voluntarily. In the Danish community media interviewed this has resulted in the absence of locally produced programmes.

When looking to the recent Covid-19 pandemic, Denmark has, generally and when compared to other countries in Europe and beyond, been found to have managed the pandemic with a very high level of success, which is due to a combination of the trust (described above) enjoyed by the (public) health information in Denmark provided by public service media and of the health authorities in general. Data accumulated by the European Social Survey from 2002 to 2018 indicates the country has the highest levels of trust in Europe[116], which proved beneficial for Denmark as the pandemic unfolded. The population was quick to fall in line with the government's regulations, which saw Denmark become one of the first European countries to institute a national lockdown, close its borders and enforce social distancing.

An estimated 90 percent of Danes have faith in their nation's healthcare system according to Hope Project[117], an initiative that tracks the public's perception of the government's COVID-19 management. This meant that when tests and vaccines were introduced, they were met with little resistance. *"I was a little bit worried when the test system was being rolled out. Is this something that people will see as an infringement of their rights?"* recalled Michael Bang Petersen, the head of Hope Project, in an interview with the news wing of the International Monetary Fund. *"People instead saw it as something you did for each other. I'm being tested not because the state says that I need to be tested, but I am being tested so that I protect you, so that we can get back to a normal way of life much faster."*

So, slightly humorously, one could say that the trustful population and the quality public service media constitute the most considerable obstacle to public health information in the community media in Denmark.

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116 https://cphpost.dk/?p=138174

117 https://politicalscience.ku.dk/research/projects/hope/

How could the challenges be met, and the good examples replicated?

In view of this study's findings, one of the community media interviewed, Radio Bazaar, along with the public health specialists and communicators, believe that there is rich potential for alliances between community media and specialists in developing new, participatory programmes on some of the continued public health challenges in the form of overweight and mental health. With a long-term perspective and some funding sought for the duration of the project-phase, community media could be a good and solid base for ongoing coverage with the engagement of one or more school-classes. This would require the identification of a teacher, interested and willing to engage, a local community ready to back the initiative and a connection with a public health specialist. The requirement and format would have to be elaborated together with these people and institutions.

Such a 'development project' could carry important value for the participating youths as documented based on past experience, for the local community and for the local community media, gaining new visibility as a change agent in the community.

3. Recommendations

Community media can become key actors for health promotion and empowering people to increase their control over and improve their health. In Denmark, there are several positive examples of best practices in public health promotion, but so far not involving community media. Specialists believe that this could be a powerful opening of new potentials in advancement of health literacy among ordinary people and communities in Denmark.

Public health media coverage should be based on the understanding of the community needs and the perceptions of their (local) audiences. It must also include the active participation of community in the media, and from within the health sector. With the important potential identified along with the resignation even among very dynamic and interested community media, a way to mobilise and motivate stations and health professionals would need to be brought about.

Could community media in Denmark play a role in public health communication – for change?

In the design of the present studies, it was foreseen that a number of community media-based public health programme producers would have been met, and needs for strengthening of their capacity, presentation styles and ways to engage their audiences would have been identified.

In Denmark the findings were different. They include:

- A national-level series of unresolved public health information challenges identified;
- A general population trusting the national authorities and the information provided by the national and regional public service media;

- Community media in Denmark being presented by all as past their most dynamic epoch, living well in small community 'pockets' with well-established (elderly) audiences, accepting the status quo;
- Community (local, not-for-profit) media in Denmark well anchored in the national legislation with clearly described rules and regulations, bi-annual openings for applications - and they get (limited) state support. The community media's organisations do not consider to be operating with any major threat to their legal and financial space being limited in the years to come. The next 5-year media agreement has just been passed;
- Community media, however, have no major national visibility or general, public recognition. This so much that the 2019 MPM for Denmark did not mention community media. When the researcher was approached, she did not know about it;
- Community media finding that their daily production environment with untrained volunteer broadcasters, does not provide the basis for development of (public) health programmes matching the quality provided by the national and regional public service media;
- The one station met, with a strong desire – and past tries – to engage in programming around public health for their multi-ethnic audiences, had given up, due to challenges involving public health professionals both on the sociological and the medical sides.

The needs and openings identified:

- Despite high-quality, trusted public service information, a high level of public debate about 'health literacy' with dynamic research and documentation environments, there are still unresolved public health challenges including around overweight and mental health among youths;
- Community media have given up – but many could be interested in being part of facilitated, dynamic processes of engaging in the local community – not necessarily only with individual citizens, but with the educational, social and business sectors, lifting together;
- Public health educators and pedagogues are interested in engaging and find that community media (which they had, "honestly…" not thought about before) could be excellent and appropriate platforms for new approaches.

Recommendations for a 2-day workshop

In Denmark it is recommended that the 2-day workshop takes place as soon as the grants have been awarded to engage public health specialists from the beginning, as there is no present public health programming in the stations.

The objective of the workshop would be to map a way forward, including additional funds needed for public health specialist support (unless their

institutions could support as a new research focus?) – and to agree on a step-by-step process.

The workshop could include the following activities:

- Create a meeting ground between the two grantees and public health professionals. They will share their entry points: What is the situation of the stations; what are the public health specialists / the health literacy specialists' communication challenges;
- Sharing good practice examples of community media's role in other countries (Austria, Ireland, Spain – possibly others);
- Sharing good practice examples of public health communication – creating results;
- Engaging, creatively, in exploring how the two stations could start public health literacy processes:
    - Identifying the overall aim;
    - Presenting the step-by-step results desired;
    - providing an initial action plan;
    - Identifying the support capacity needed at each station
    - Identifying the additional funds needed for technical support (or pro bono?)

The final outcome expected:

- 2 stations have a renewed commitment to covering public health, have a stronger understanding of health literacy,
- 2 stations have prepared a public health policy – and a programme series
- An information campaign (to be identified – scope+) will help increase the potential of community media for social, community development purposes

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Dr. Bente Klarlund is a medical doctor and one of Denmark's most prominent public health communicators. https://www.benteklarlund.dk/ Personal interview carried out on August 4, 2022. Bente Klarlund Pedersen <Bente.Klarlund.Pedersen@regionh.dk>

Prof. Bjarne Bruun Jensen is recognized as one of the country's absolute experts when it comes to children and young people and (public) health. https://research.regionh.dk/da/persons/bjarne-bruun-jensen(846a26ee-c641-4fab-813c-bc868add8d39).html Bjarne Bruun Jensen <bjarne.bruun.jensen@regionh.dk>

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Anne Illemann Christensen, head of research, Health Science, the National institute for public health, anch@sdu.dk, www.si-folkesundhed.dk

COMMUNITY MEDIA RESEARCH AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

Johan Søbjerg Loller, Head of Media and Media Statistics Office, Ministry of Culture, Denmark <jol@slks.dk>

Per Jauert, media researcher Aarhus University. Was part of the Ministry of Culture commission preparing and following the development of community media in Denmark. Personal interview and email exchange July-August 2022. https://pure.au.dk/portal/da/persons/per-jauert(52adb137-4f11-4b54-bf9b-d7a21e708b8b).html

Leif Loennsman, former head of Denmarks Radio. Personal interview on 8August 8, 2022. Loensman was at the forefront of introduction of community media in Denmark in the 1980s – and other access initiatives in the media. Loensman followed the developments and recently carried out studies of the impact of Covid 19 on the media in Denmark.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY RADIO ASSOCIATION, MOVEMENT

Gitte Thomsen, head of the secretariat of the national association of community media, SAML .

Personal interview on August 8 and September 9, 2022. Gitte is also station manager of Folkets Radio in Aalborg. See below.

Stig Hartvig Nielsen, Formerly active in the SAML (see above), editor of the community media magazine: https://danskradio.dk/ (no longer active), a trainer and facilitator in the movement.

Personal interview and extensive email correspondence

COMMUNITY MEDIA MANAGERS INTERVIEWED

Rui Monteiro Station manager Radio Bazaar and other media initiatives within the Aarhus Radio House. Head of 'Aarhus Global Media'. Rui Monteiro <farmont@gmail.com>

Anton Andersen Station manager Radio Ringkoebing – house the 'Radiohuset Ringkoebing' www.radioringkobing.dk anton@radioringkobing.dk

Niels A. Holst Station manager of Radio Roende https://www.sdlr.dk/) <nah@c.dk>

Gitte Thomsen Station manager of FOLKETS RADIO in Aalborg. http://www.folketsradio.dk SAML saml@saml.dk Gitte is also the head of the secretariat of SAML, the national community media association.

Nathalie Bitton, Editor in Chief Radio TV Glad https://www.tv-glad.dk/) not a community media platform but works with and produces for people living with mental handicaps. Therefore included. information@gladfonden.dk; https://www.tv-glad.dk/

Ireland

1. Overview of National Discourse on Public Health

In Ireland, health policy processes are generally driven by the Department of Health whose main role is to support the Minister, and Ministers of State, in the development and implementation of policy for the health services. These services are delivered by the **Health Services Executive (HSE)** [118]. In the 2022 Budget, the Department has made its biggest investment in Ireland's Health and Social Care Services in the history of the State. The intention being to provide much needed funding for the advancement of the Healthy Communities Programme which provides community support projects such as: cancer screening services, disability services, additional supports for community and voluntary organisations; drug and alcohol inclusion services, better healthcare for travellers, the homeless and refugees, better mental health services, inequalities in accessing physical activities for kids and teens. The Department of Health recently appointed Ipsos MRBI to complete a national survey about health behaviours. The issues covered in this survey concern smoking, alcohol, antibiotic resistance, GP[119] utilisation, mental health, social cohesion, weight and suicide.

1.1 Core Challenges

Covid, homelessness, obesity, addiction, ageing and loneliness are core challenges which continue to dominate Ireland's Public Health and particularly in Public Service Broadcasting output. The Ukrainian crisis and the problem of housing incoming refugees continue to feature strongly in all media output. Running parallel to this discourse is the issue of the lack of housing for Ireland's homeless population. It is of considerable importance to this report that all the reports produced in the last few years on creating a 'healthier Ireland for all' have made reference to collaborating with voluntary organisations in the community and the notion of participation within communities.

In the ***Country Health Profile Ireland*** **(2019)**, circulatory diseases and cancer are the most common form of death. Whilst life expectancy has increased due to the improvements in treatments and some slight reductions in risk factors, it is apparent, however, that those aged 65 and older are living with chronic illness. Much research has been done on tobacco addiction and obesity in adults and children, yet these issues continue to affect the population. Alzheimer's disease is

118 The Health Service Executive (HSE) employs over 100,000 people to run all of the public health services in Ireland.

119 General Practitioner: doctor who provides medical care for a particular community.

on the increase. Those in socially and economically deprived areas continue along the spectrum of inequality when it comes to public health.

The **Sláintecare[120] Implementation Strategy**, published by the government in 2018, details precise measures for the next three years and a ten-year strategic direction. Its focus is to strengthen primary care programmes and foster affiliations within communities. However, there is no guarantee that funding will be made available for implementation of all its recommended strategies. Measures have been taken to reduce tobacco addiction and reduce sugar in minerals so as to tackle obesity in children. The healthcare system is in crisis with long waiting lists for diagnostic scans for bone density, liver, bile duct and pancreatic cancers and elective surgeries. The is an acute lack of hospital beds and patients encounter long days waiting on trollies. Furthermore, nurses and doctors are emigrating to other countries in order to work in less stressful environments.

Mental Health continues to be an issue and in 2019, 12,465 self-harm cases presented to hospitals for treatment. The Covid-19 Pandemic has accelerated the instances of poor mental health and well-being. Whilst these issues are given high exposure across all media platforms, the issue of rehabilitation receives little or no coverage. There is still a certain amount of stigma surrounding mental health, which results in people suffering alone and being further isolated from society.
Discourses on neuro physical disabilities tend to focus on personal stories from well-known individuals. Given this focus, issues like care and support do not enter the debate. In the case of children with such disabilities, there is immense concern for parents/guardians in terms of who will care for their children after they are gone.

1.2 Which information gaps do the public experience?

As the Covid-19 pandemic was starting to permeate society, so too were experts at centres for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organisation and the US Surgeon General. Information concerning protection was overwhelming for the general public and constantly changing. Along with this came **conspiracy theories** leading to **vaccine hesitancy**. Health experts often disagree in terms of what measures should or should not be taken and this was evident from the outset of the pandemic. This resulted in confusion among the general public.

Communicating the nuances of scientific progress may be especially hampered by the fact that nearly 60% of the population has **medium or low scientific literacy**. Given the uncertainty involved in an emerging global pandemic, the incremental and often contentious way in which scientific knowledge typically advances, and shifting and diverging recommendations, it is not surprising that public confusion is common and trust in official governmental agencies is hindered (Basch et al., 2022).

120 Slaintecare: 2017 Slaintecare Report – vision for the future of health care in Ireland with focus on expansion of primary care into the community.

Furthermore, the **younger population tend to look to well-known personalities, influencers and peers on social media accounts to inform themselves on matters of health** rather than looking to public health sites. The content of official public health agency social media accounts does not receive as many views as communications posted by popular entertainers, influencers, or, in some cases, even consumers. Partnerships with carefully vetted content creators may help to extend the reach of accurate health information on social media, particularly to young people who tend to use these platforms in higher numbers than older adults (Ibid).

A **Celsius**[121] **Webinar** took place in November 2022. Questions for discussion centred on how well the media, scientists and public health experts performed in communicating Covid-19. **Professor Luke O'Neill**[122] (Immunologist) was part of this webinar. He also broadcasts on Newstalk - a commercial radio platform - tackling a different issue each week with the aim of enlightening all people in the world of science. During Covid-19 pandemic, O'Neill dominated the media and spoke to the nation daily through both TV and Radio and continues to do so. He is considered a popular, public speaker and expert on all Covid-19 issues. He is passionate about spreading knowledge:

> *"The more the general public knows, the better. "There's big things coming down the track that science is driving. And why wouldn't people have their opinion on them and make decisions based on at least some knowledge of these things?"*

Yet, when O'Neill was contacted with a view to interviewing him, he declined to take part; the reason being: *'unfortunately I'm not involved in public health'* (O'Neill, 31st August 2022).

1.3 Community Media's role as information source for engaging communities for Public Health

The Institute of Public Health (IPH) (established in 1988 and funded by the Department of Health) is diametrically accountable to the Chief Medical Officers in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Its function is to inform public policy to support healthier communities in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The IPH is actively involved with government departments at a national and local level and collaborates with schools, clinical and academic institutions, community organisations, local councils in Ireland and globally. One of their projects was to undertake a Healthy Impact Assessment of a proposed tax on sugar sweetened minerals. The rationale was to support a reduction in obesity in Ireland. What is pertinent to this report is that during the process of assessment there was 'great synergy' between communities, voluntary organisations, HSE providers including pharmacies and primary care providers.

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121 Celsius: Dublin City University Interdisciplinary Research Group studying Cultural, Ethical, Legal and Social Issues in Science.

122 Luke O'Neill – Professor of Biochemistry Trinity College Dublin, leading expert on Covid-19 Pandemic

In 2022, the IPH unveiled its first digital learning section 'Introduction to Health Impact Assessment'. Following this, a 'Public Health Matters' podcast was launched and each of these series of podcasts were both informative and enlightening.

The first series featured **Sir Michael Marmot**, a global expert in health inequalities. The focus of the podcast was inequality and how social factors can influence life expectancy, and in just a few short sentences, he articulated one of the biggest challenges facing individuals with issues like mental health, obesity and addiction:

> *"It is very intellectually taxing to be poor. if you have to think have I got money for food for dinner tonight and pay the rent on Friday – so much thinking time spent on this that you don't have intellectual space for anything else.* (Sir Marmot on the discourses on obesity and addiction)

This **level of insight, understanding and empathy**, especially around obesity, tends not to feature very much in public discourse. **Dr Patrick Murphy** is unrelenting when it comes to delivering trustworthy public health information. He argues that it all comes down to the 'messenger' and cites the example of **'Bressie' Niall Breslin**, who is **one of Ireland's most inspiring mental health advocates**, public speaker, musician, best-selling author, founder of the charity 'A Lust for Life' and is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons**.** Dr Murphy articulates:

> *"this is someone who has issues with mental health; what does he do? He brings his own experiences to his public speaking and engages with his audiences. He is listened to, people want to hear him, want to see him. They will listen to him" (*Dr Patrick Murphy, September 2022)

A busy GP working in the West of Ireland who wishes to remain anonymous, adds an interesting dimension to this and urges caution in how health information is conveyed saying *'many are completely happy with the way they live'*. He believes that people with intergenerational poverty, and who have had few opportunities in life, can be left *'resistant to being lectured on the shortcomings of their life style'*.

In the **modified mental health policy 'Sharing the Vision' 2020-2030** (Department of Health) **'Social Prescribing' (SP)** is given considerable weight as a valuable means of linking those struggling with mental health issues to **community based supports and interventions** through the local voluntary and community sector. What is of considerable importance in this strategy is that it accentuates the idea that clinical healthcare services cannot alone meet the health needs of the Irish Population. It lays out hereunder that social prescribing is an effective means of engaging people in non-clinical activities and services in their communities. SP can have positive outcomes including combating post-pandemic anxiety, physical health and health behaviours, and reductions in social

isolation, loneliness and anomie which is a total disconnect with society leading to distressing consequences. In Ireland, there are currently 31 HSE funded social prescribing services across the country; of which 19 are in Slaintecare Healthy Communities, based in areas of disadvantage. SP has been given considerable weight in the National Newspapers like the *Irish Times*, which is owned by Irish Times Trust. As recently as June 2022, they did a double page spread on SP. **Dr. Bridget Kiely**, a PhD scholar at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, who also works as a GP in Dublin's north inner city, is presently involved in researching the **effectiveness of social prescribing** for people with multiple, on-going health conditions. Dr Kiely believes:

> *"SP has a role to play including being a very effective way of getting GPs thinking more about the wider communities that they are working in and what resources are available out there." She also expressed awareness of GPs apprehension in referring patients into unfamiliar spheres. "Therefore, building up relationships between GPs and link workers, and between link workers and community resources, is really important."* (Irish Times, Tuesday, June 28th, 2022)

Dr Mike O'Callaghan feels community radio does not do enough to tackle the more difficult and emotive topics of health, preferring safe bet, sanitised discussions around HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy), Blood Pressure, exercise and weight'. He feels presenters and guests may not have sufficient professional knowledge to tackle more complex sensitive issues like stomas, continence wear, end of life/palliative care. However, he sees a role for advocacy in areas poorly managed by the Health Service particularly, autism, disability, and neurodegenerative conditions where people *'must fight at every turn'* a system devoted to providing a little to everyone instead of a lot 'to the very needy' (Dr Mike O'Callaghan, (November 2022).

This links in with a discussion on the licencing process from Liam Boyle, a Higher Executive and Data Protection Officer with the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland:

> *"CR[123] Stations tend not to take on controversial subjects, they are very conservative in what they discuss on air and wary of breaching BAI[124] codes and rules. They have a very strict interpretation of impartiality and balance. Essentially they don't have the confidence to tackle these issues – we don't feel like we're equipped to do it correctly so we won't touch it sort of idea"* (Boyle, September 14th 2022).

Dr Patrick O'Donnell is involved in the area of Covid testing, vaccination, and management of infection in relation to people who are homeless and incoming refugees. Mid-West Public Health, and Fintan Walsh, a public health consultant,

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123 Community Radio

124 BAI: Broadcasting Authority of Ireland regulator of Broadcasting

declined to discuss these issues in spite of recommendations from Dr O'Donnell who not only runs a clinical practice but is also a Clinical Fellow in Social Inclusion at the School of Medicine here in Limerick. However, they are working on a communications system for Ukrainian refugees. O'Donnell does not appear to have any knowledge of community media and found trusted healthcare workers and hostel managers most helpful in disseminating health information to the homeless, and to those with complex addiction problems, who need to be vaccinated. He did praise local media (the commercial sphere) for its '*dissemination of information in a calm and balanced way*' during the Pandemic.

In terms of the challenges in conveying public health information **Ms Nina Orfali**, Consultant Haematologist, stressed the importance of **information being presented in a 'digestible' fashion** taking account of non-native English speakers. She believes Public Representatives have a strong role to play in the dissemination of public health information across all media platforms both online and face-to-face. Furthermore, she feels *'community not-for-profit media could be a valuable way to deliver information and those community groups will likely have a good understanding of how to maximise readership/audience within their areas'* (Ms Orfali, November 2022)

Dr. Peter Kelly, a Dublin based GP with a busy practice, is acutely aware of the rapidly changing public health discourses in Ireland at present. He feels community media can fill the roll of calm, balanced reportage on public health because commercial media tends frame information around 'interesting stories'. He sees community media as a valuable source *'for more **practical information** like answering the where, how, when that listeners need to know about issues like cervical check, vaccination centres and low cost counselling'*.

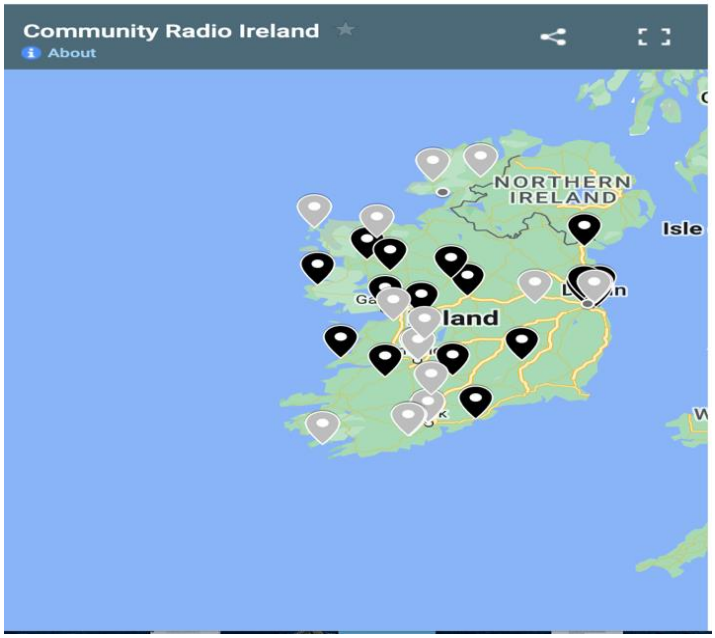
Concerning media literacy in the health campaign model, which is focused on raising awareness in order to change behaviour, **Sonia Livingstone** asks those charged with promoting media literacy: How much this is about disseminating knowledge and facts, and how much this is actually about changing behaviour, and particularly about changing behaviour among vulnerable or target groups, which is, of course, the focus of much health campaigns. So, whether we're trying to get people to stop smoking or practise safe sex or improve their diet, we have a long history of how to manage this, and I think we have to say we have a long history of knowing exactly how difficult it is, **not only to get information over, but especially to change practices** (Livingstone, 2005).

The HSE is very much focused on promoting health equity and recently carried out an audit concerning public health literacy for employees. The rationale being to identify possible communicative barriers to patients. The World Health Organisation (2008) has identified it as an important element of national and international strategies to reduce health inequity, and as such it is an important component of achieving the HSE vision for everybody to have **'easy access to high quality care and services** that they have confidence in and staff are proud to provide' (HSE 2007).

MSD[125] Ireland is committed to making a difference to communities. *The Right Click? Exploring Trust in Online Health Information*; Ipson MRBI published a report which was commissioned by MSD Ireland. The report shines a light on inequality in terms of how people access health information and indeed understand it. It also stresses the need to shorten the **gap between the public and trustworthy public health information** so as to ensure a better quality of life. Whilst digital platforms have intensified access, this continues to be problematic given the threats posed by **fake news and misinformation**. The research stresses the 'ongoing importance of traditional, interpersonal interactions in imparting health information, with 84% of respondents believing their GP to be a very trustworthy source, followed by a medical or surgical consultant (78%) and pharmacist (68%). 77% said they would visit a website if recommended by their healthcare professional' (MSD, 2018). There is certainly a desire for more direction on what information is trustworthy and what is not.

2. Overview of Community Media Landscape

2.1 Profile of Community Radio



(Community Radio Forum of Ireland, https://craol.ie)

There are 22 licenced Community Media stations in Ireland.

Athlone Community Radio
Community Radio Castlebar
Community Radio Kilkenny **City *Health Corner***
Connemara Community Radio
Claremorris Community Radio Ltd
Community Radio Youghal ***Mind Matters***
103.2 Dublin City FM ***Missing Links***
Dublin South FM
Dundalk FM ***Rehab Care On-Air***
Flirt FM/College Campus Radio Limited
Cork City Community Radio ***Anything Goes***
Liffey Sound 96.4 FM
Near 90 FM ***Lifeline***
92.5 Phoenix FM ***Making a Difference***
Raidió na Life 106.4FM
Raidio Corca Baiscinn
RosFM 94.6 Community ***Radio Voyage Around My Brain***
Tipperary Mid-West Radio ***Morning Call***
West Limerick 102fm
UCC 98.3FM
Wired FM
Loughrea Community Radio ***Mind the Head***

The map above provides a list of Community Radio Stations and a sample of programmes dealing with Public Health. It was not possible to listen to all the public health output but those that have specialised programmes dealing with health have been highlighted in bold, and they are those that have been listened to for the purpose of this report. The topics covered vary from Covid-19, mental health, neurological issues, the menopause and hormone replacement therapy, loneliness, addiction, housing, refugees, disability, skin conditions and health care

125 MSD: MSD Ireland Human Healthcare functions to research areas that inform and shape debate on key issues.

supports. **Dublin City FM** deals with homelessness and has developed strong links with 'Inner City Helping Homeless' which was established in 2013 as a result of so many people living on the streets. Together, along with the local community, they were able to galvanise actions like soup runs and the collection of warm clothing. Some stations, as demonstrated in this report, deal with public health both on-air and online. Listeners are able to listen back to programmes they may have missed. The output of other stations is a mix of music, daily mass, book reviews and cultural activities taking place within their communities. Community stations regularly look for support in terms of funding – donations, support from local businesses - and some have come up with novel ideas to help with keeping their stations afloat.

June 18th, 2021, saw Community Radio being celebrated in Ireland as 'National Community Radio Day'. It was supported by the **BAI** and hosted by **Dundalk FM**. President of Ireland M. D. Higgins was present with full support and a special message to all. It was a very successful day full of events and received good coverage across public service broadcasts. The theme for this year highlighted and celebrated all the volunteers from migrant communities who give their time and share their skills. They have to work and negotiate with a range of different communities in order to produce programmes and in the process they hone their communication competencies. **CRAOL (Community Radio Forum of Ireland)** has celebrated National Community Radio Day since 2015. The day is hosted by different stations every year.

Trustworthy media and journalism have become a critical focus for Community Media due to the rise of fake news and disinformation which can mislead citizens and intensify discord within communities. The aspiration of community media is social cohesion, accountability to the community they both serve and participate in. **The ability to understand media ownership and content is imperative** given the accessibility of information in the digital age and the increasing sophistication of algorithms. Of equal importance is the process of funding applications because the state can often prioritise goals of economic growth over resource sustainability. The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland and CRAOL have consistently sought to develop strategies to safeguard and develop community media. Furthermore, in this new participatory culture, media health literacy is vital because citizens must be able to use digital media services in a safe manner, participate with others in the public sphere, as well as fulfilling the resourceful capability advancing technologies can offer.

2.2 National Governance of Community Radio

Community media operates under the **Broadcasting Authority of Ireland**. The BAI is an independent statutory organisation which is responsible for the regulation of broadcasting in Ireland and monitors broadcast content to ensure compliance with codes and rules. Three strands of broadcasting shape the landscape: Public Service, Commercial and Community. Temporary contracts are also awarded by the BAI each year, these contracts vary in terms of duration and are generally offered to hospitals, colleges and community projects. The **2009 Broadcasting Act** acknowledges that community media is a distinct component

of media in Ireland, very much embedded in the ecosystem and as a result must actively provide a social benefit to the community. Indeed this reflects the position expressed by independent media regulation in Ireland since 1997. Contracts may be entered into by the BAI with members of a community that are representative of, and accountable to, the community. Monetary reward must be attained for the sustainment of the station only. This supports the regulative facet of community media which points to the proprietorship and administration management arrangements of community media organisations. Community media organisations should be owned and controlled by not-for-profit entities. In addition, their structures should provide for membership, management and operation of the organisation by members of the community served. A strong network of community stations has developed since the first services were licensed on a pilot basis in 1995. There are twenty-two licensed community stations in Ireland.

Liam Boyle, a Higher Executive and Data Protection Officer with the BAI, discusses the licencing process:

> *"We've had various iterations of community media licence in Ireland. Since the late 80s and overall the general licencing of community radio hasn't changed a huge amount. The current provisions are set out in the Broadcast Act 2009, there's a sound broadcasting section, it's fairly prescriptive and compared to the commercial radio aspects to the legislation it sets out the social need of stations and what they have to square off in terms of delivering social need to the community so that's considered in an application and they must meet those different criteria. The sector is crying out for more funding and better help with making funding cases."(Boyle, September 14th, 2022)*

2.3 Where could CM fill its role as an information provider engaging local communities around Public Health?

In 2019, the BAI introduced a community media action scheme which provided them with a development plan to boost the viability of the community media sphere. Central to this plan was to progress and execute a new **'Social Benefit Programme'** in order to provide a **framework for stations**. Members of the **BAI, CRAOL and Nexus** worked in partnership to identify the types of benefits generated by community media. Nexus came into existence 1990, and is not-for-profit research co-operative based in Dublin and funded by social scientists and consultants. The Report, published in 2020, serves to highlight the legislative requisites for community media to deliver a social benefit to the community it serves. Stations can be quite varied in terms of their audiences and would have quite specific niche audiences. Some will focus on disability and women's health whilst others will focus on mental well-being and suicide.

> *On the community sector, it is really about social benefit. Most of the community stations are not driven by the need to increase and*

> *grow membership. It is more about providing a benefit to the local catchment area, particularly on the community side. As time passes and perhaps as different supports are available to the sector, we could look at how we might then be able to report on outputs and set targets for them.* (Public Service Report 2021)

Over the last couple of years, there has been more targeted funding for the community and commercial sector. A lot has been driven by needs within the sector and using **Sound and Vision funding** to support it through those years. 'Sound and Vision' was established under the **Broadcasting (Funding) Act of 2003** and has made a large contribution to Irish broadcasting and Irish life. **Liam Boyle:**

> "*... since 2015, 11 funding rounds have been completed under the Sound and Vision 3 providing 1,322 projects totalling 60.7m Euro. The scheme has helped fund 2,653 hours of culturally relevant (including Irish language) Irish content across television and radio. It is a fundamental part of the funding infrastructure for the independent production sector. The Scheme operates on an open basis and facilitates a diverse range of programme makers from a small business making programmes for community and local broadcasters to large production houses making films for National and International audiences. Through its ancillary measures, it also supports skill training and development."*

The Social Benefit was necessary to ensure the sector remained supported, but was not something that had been there beforehand. While entities are eligible to apply for grant aid, it is competitive so it is difficult for them to set targets as to what level of support they would be given and the levels of programming. The point of this social benefit framework is to allow stations to demonstrate the social benefit being provided to potential funders like Government grant **Pobal**[126] funding.

Boyle describes the funding process below:

> *"We embarked on a long process with the sector and so with CRAOL and Community TV association we workshopped different ideas over a six/seven month period. So they have this in their back pocket and can help them put together an application for government grant Pobal funding through community services programme or even on a wider scale and we would have some credos that would get funding from Europe. Stations worked with Sean O Siochru, Ciaran Kissane and me piloted the framework with selected stations and ran surveys at the same time because the stations want this.*

126 Pobal: established 1992 by the Irish Government in agreement with European Commission to manage an EU Grant for local development. Provides management & support services to 38 programmes in areas of social Inclusion Equality, Inclusive Employment & Enterprise, and Early Years and Young People.

Ended with a report that is used in a variety of variety of different ways, has been used by the BAI itself as part of targeted rounds of sound and vision. So, before community stations would have been included in open rounds with commercial radio and tv players in Ireland and wouldn't have been of massive benefit to the stations. Obviously they get funding but from an outcome point of view it wasn't particularly bent towards community. So there's been two rounds of targeted community radio rounds specifically focussed on social benefit, where they have to demonstrate that in their applications and it's linked to deliverables as well and it's also been incorporated into our currently ongoing community radio licencing process as well. It's being used in lots of different ways as well, the stations own it and it's up to them to put it into practice through Pobal application" (Boyle, September 14th 2022)

The visibility of Community Media is problematic. Individuals, and communities, have favourite stations they tune in to on a daily basis but they do not seem to be aware of who owns what. Tipperary community media have a loyal following and the area they broadcast to is a mix of rural, agricultural and urban population. When questioned on visibility, public health and CR, Boyle has some interesting insights:

"There's a lack of distinctiveness in trying to mark CR out as being distinctive in the audio-visual ecosystem. Difficult for a listener to tell the difference between commercial and community media as both have advertising, community media more limited in what they can do. Local radio is so strong in Ireland and that's kind of the point as well – localised news local radio and it's difficult to tell the difference. It's a big problem from a listenership point of view, you can try and square off a lot of those different issues if you just focus on listenership and focus on output. What we decided to do at a mid-way point in the workshops – we were playing the wrong game trying to compete on an output basis. You need to look at outcomes instead and social benefit outcomes – you'll get a lot more engagement from the public if they see the station being active in community issues outside of the station, outside of the actual content they put on air. Very varying degrees of engagement across the different stations. Some are very active in the community on certain niche issues and others very much sound like a commercial radio and wouldn't have massive engagement with the community and still thinking along the lines of JNLR figures and performance which is what we are trying to get away from. Distinctiveness is a problem. CRAOL do their best in trying to lobby in as much is possible and they do very well in terms of visibility at joint Oireachtas level and generally having politicians ears. They even manage to get a few legislative concessions in

> *terms of broadcasts and over the last year we have this online social media regulation bill and the future media commission which has been on-going."* (Boyle, September 24th 2022)

The **Oireachtas**[127] debated the challenges facing the Broadcasting sector as a result of Covid-19 in November, 2021. Stakeholders involved in this debate were **John Purcell**, chairman of the **Independent Broadcasters of Ireland**, **Declan Gibbons**, station manager **Kilkenny Community Radio**, presenting on behalf of CRAOL and **Mary Lennon**, project co-ordinator **CRAOL (Community Radio Forum of Ireland)**. CRAOL is the system which links the Irish community radio sector and they have over 2,000 community radio volunteers. They are fully committed to evolving the community radio movement and providing support to stations so that they may realise their potential to make a difference and deliver a social benefit to the very communities they part of. In terms of ensuring stations were implementing their media information and health literacy role, they carried out a survey (April, 2022) to establish the effect Covid-19 was having on stations.

The impact was felt in many areas such as travel to the stations for elderly volunteers, health and safety limitations affecting funding opportunities and restrictions in terms of maintaining a presence in stations, closures of local businesses who could no longer sustain sponsorship, having to use new media technologies in order to remain in contact with communities.

Other issues covered were sustainability in relation to the environment and how stations are facilitating NGOs and local groups which are active in the community to utilise community radio as a platform for disseminating credible information. The complexities of embracing technology was also discussed and indeed stations were applauded for adapting to the challenges and keeping their stations on air in order to fulfil their media literacy role. Tributes were paid to local stations who lifted the spirit of rural Ireland.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue the potential difficulties involved in gaining access to participants and propose the use of a *'gate-keeper'* who is *'typically an influential member of the community, one who commands a lot of respect, and whose acceptance will allow you to network with the other members of the [health] community'*.

Medical professionals were, for the most part, happy to waive their anonymity. However, those involved in making decisions on communicative action, in terms of what public health information should be released and to whom, declined to participate when asked to supply their names. There is no doubt there is a disconnect between those bodies whose role is to implement health care strategies and Community Media as a deliverable platform for health literacy.

Declan Gibbons, station manager with Kilkenny Community Radio, expressed their desire to be included in Government information campaigns *'if our station had access to those, and if they were automatically included, it would have a*

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127 Oireachtas: The National Parliament makes laws for Ireland, elects the Government and approves the funding of Government Departments.

huge impact on incomes and sustainability' (Houses of The Oireachtas Debate, 2022).

In terms of issues concerning climate change there is much public discourse in the Public Service and Commercial arenas. Some stations in rural Ireland touch on issues like windfarms because they impact on their community.

In regard to climate change, **Mary Lennon** feels that community is the ideal platform for disseminating information on this very broad topic:

> *"On climate change, community media is well placed to work on the ground with the communities, maybe with younger people, and to promote that push up, rather than push down, with climate change. A person may ask what he or she can do as he or she is only one person. That is what community media can concentrate on and work with the communities on. On what is needed for the community radio sector, no more than the independent sector, community radio has expenses, such as the insurance, licences and all the overheads, but it is providing a social benefit within the community and is covering all the topics that promote community cohesion and community living. There could be more assistance with programme costs for community stations*" (Lennon, Houses of the Oireachtas, 2022)

2.4 How are Community Media Reflected in the Media Pluralism Monitor

There are mounting concerns over the progressively more concentrated nature of media ownership which raises issues around diversity of programming and content. The threat posed to democratic dialogue and debate is palpable and information inequalities continue to exist. Maintaining plurality of ownership, context and viewpoint in broadcasting services is of vital importance. Debates in the Oireachtas have raised a number of issues concerning the concentration of ownership. The BAI has recently launched a new website which provides information about ownership and shareholdings of Irish Media Companies and can be found at www.mediaownership.ie.

Frustration and anger is evidenced in an interview with psychotherapist Derek Hanrahan. He raises concerns in relation to support and illness. He argues that *'illness creates dependency which we hate'* and has much to say around issues of control and sees *'we have moved from doctors know best to state knows best, there has to be some sort of alliance between public health professions and community media because it is crucial that each understands the other'* (Derek Hanrahan, October, 29th 2022).

The BAI expediate a diversity of voices, opinions, sources of news and current affairs in audio and audio-visual media. In terms of performing its legislative functions, the BAI is responsible for guaranteeing the delivery of open and

pluralistic broadcasting services, upholding diversity in more prominent commercial and community broadcasting services. Unequivocally the BAI ratifies the legislative principle that media plurality is vital to the strength of Irish democracy and deems the statutes concerning proprietorship and control of broadcasting services crucial to the success of plurality in the Irish media. The BAI chief executive, **Michael O'Keeffe** states:

> *"The BAI has announced funding of €6m under the Sound & Vision 4 Broadcasting Funding Scheme. A total of 36 radio projects and 22 TV projects have been successful in Round 43 of the scheme, following a competitive assessment process. Overall, the round attracted a total of 123 applications, seeking funding in the region of €15.5m. The proposed package of recommendations will facilitate the production of a range of projects reflecting Irish culture, heritage, and experience, that will be broadcast on a range of community, commercial and public service broadcasters. The funded programmes include a wide variety of genres and formats that will appeal to a diversity of Irish audiences and include English, Irish and bi-lingual projects"* (August, 2022)

Radio remains a key source of news for audiences, particularly on a regional basis. As in the 2012-2014 period, when considering audiences in terms of radio groups, RTÉ is the lead player in radio news and current affairs but local commercial radio, when viewed in aggregate, performs well on a regional basis (BAI Report on *Ownership and Control of Media Businesses in Ireland*, 2015-2017). The BAI promote and support plurality through licensing, ownership and control policy, advice on media mergers and research on media plurality. **Boyle** explores the challenges surrounding the perception of community media , commercial sector and Public Service:

> *"There's no real cohesion between Community Media, the Commercial Sector and Public Service Broadcasters. They all do their own thing. Independently, community media see themselves as being here for the greater good. Sometimes it can get quite political and ideological – we'll never accept sponsorship from a commercial entity sort of scenario. We're in very early days here and we're talking to RTE (National Broadcaster of Ireland (and TG4, the National Irish Language Public Service Broadcaster) and how they work better with community media in Ireland, particularly RTE and their connections with communities outside Dublin because this is an issue for RTE, then from a social benefit aspect, especially TG4 because it's at a crossroads now. There's no problems in terms of the perception of where they are as the Irish language broadcaster. But they want to be more than that, they want to be the vehicle for Irish language development in Ireland outside of broadcasting they want to be the main body pushing this and they want the funding to match it. They see themselves as transcending*

broadcast output and trying to square off other kind of performance metrics where they have an impact. They're based in the Gaeltacht (Gaeltacht are districts, individually or collectively in Ireland where the Irish Government recognises that the Irish language is the predominant vernacular). g areas and they are a publisher broadcaster which means they rely on the strength of the independent sector to make programmes for them. So they've facilitated the growth of fairly big independent production companies in pretty disadvantaged areas in terms of the Gaeltacht. Part of their narrative is that they create regional jobs and they're facilitating an industry so they want to capture that as well and they want to capture the connections they have with Gaeltacht areas beyond that on a social benefit area. They have expressed interest and they are much more sociologically aware of the potential here of the greater good. So BAI are saying there's things you can learn here from community radio" (Boyle, September 14th, 2022)

2.5 Influence of Digital Media on Community Radio

The smartphone is the device of choice for Irish news consumers in the morning, with 35% of respondents citing it as their 'go to' to access news. Radio continues to be popular, with 31% of news consumers in Ireland saying they get their first news of the day from the radio. This compares to 17% in the UK and an EU average of 19%. TV follows next for Irish respondents, with 15% citing the service as their first news source of the day. During the pandemic people were overwhelmed with health capital because it dominated all media platforms. As a result, 18 to 34 year olds disengaged with news and mostly avoided it. Podcasts featured high on the list between these age groups because of their quick and easy access. The research found a growth in listening to podcasts in Ireland, up three percentage points to 40% since last year. The under-45s are the largest demographic listening to podcasts, particularly 18-24-year-olds, 72% of whom said they had listened to a podcast in the past week (Digital News Report Ireland, 2022[128])

Commenting on the sponsoring of Reuters Digital News research, **Chief Executive of the BAI, Celene Craig** discusses the valuable insights provided and applauds the fact that many people in Ireland tune in to radio for their news. The Irish report is sponsored by the BAI and compiled by the Institute for Future Media, Democracy and Society, FuJo at Dublin City University:

"This is the eighth year that the BAI has sponsored the Reuters Digital News research. We do so because it provides a range of insights that informs core BAI functions, such as licensing and compliance. Given the prevalence of misinformation and

128 8th year BAI has funded the inclusion of Irish data in the Reuters International Digital News Report. Irish Data based on survey of 2,000 participants and their news consumption.

disinformation across Europe (most recently in relation to the war in Ukraine), understanding trends in news and media plurality continues to be of critical importance. The Reuters Digital News project makes a valuable contribution to this complex and challenging conversation in Ireland and internationally. In supporting projects such as the Digital News Report Ireland, the BAI continues to pursue its objective of being an informed regulator, ready to anticipate and respond to change, as well as being ready to adapt to the regulatory challenges ahead."

The main function of the Oireachtas (The Irish Parliament) is to make laws for Ireland. The Oireachtas also appoints the Government and approves the funding of Government Departments. An important function of the Oireachtas is to hold the Government to account. During September a meeting was organised to deliberate on the final report of the 'Future of Media Commission' with the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. Stakeholders were invited.

A number of issues were addressed, and in Deputy **Catherine Martin**'s opening talk, she acknowledges that the current funding model needs to be reformed because funding is a prerequisite for the sustainability and success of the media sector. Given the change in media consumption she welcomed the Commission's report and recommendations of having a regulator with more extensive responsibility. The Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill, provides for the establishment of such a new media regulator 'Coimisiun na Mean'. **Martin** further reiterates:

"A media regulator must now go beyond broadcasting, and An Coimisiún will replace the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, BAI, and have a broader role in relation to media as well as online safety. It will thereby provide the regulatory and developmental framework to implement the commission's report."

Mary Aiken is Professor of Forensic Cyberpsychology at the University of East London, adjunct Professor at University College Dublin, Geary Institute for Public Policy. In February, she was invited to an online discussion with the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media. She contends that activism online is important but does express her concerns around freedom of speech and self-regulation:

"...what we see is the rise of the cyber pitchfork mob, where people are effectively de-platformed without due process, a fair hearing or an evidence-based approach. We have seen the rise in this form of cancel culture because there is a paucity or a lack of legislation to address these issues. Like nature, the Internet abhors a vacuum and what happens is that people step in to self-regulate. We have seen social media platforms and user-generated content self-regulating. I believe the US Senator Richard Blumenthal recently

said that the age of self-policing is over. This is the crux of the problem. However, there is a very delicate balance to be struck between freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of expression and censorship. These are very complex domains." (February, 2022 Htt://gov.ie)

2.6 Community Radio in Practice and Local Impact: Case Studies

Near FM

Near FM is the community radio broadcasting arm of the Near Media Co-op. Near FM broadcasts 24 hours a day over 365 days per year. The station is licensed by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) and is a communally owned, not-for-profit radio station. It is operated by a democratic co-operative, open to all organisations and individuals living or working in Dublin North-East. The station is run by a voluntary committee of management and programmes are produced and presented by a pool of over 150 trained volunteers supported by a core group of staff.

Near FM operates an open access policy and its intention is to provide an alternative to mainstream media, a voice for the voiceless and embrace those who are excluded, on many levels, from society. They provide training and access to distribution facilities across all media platforms. The ethos of Near FM is to educate, inform and entertain. Programming is a mix of talk based programming, educational programming, radio drama and specialist music encompassing all genres.

Near FM is an information provider but it is much more than that because it also embraces its role of furnishing people with the necessary skills required to create, produce and present radio programmes . Indeed they do take their role to another level in terms of empowering people. **Jack Byrne**'s passion is palpable when he talks about emancipation for those involved in the station and the community: *"It's community development but for me it is about personal empowerment. I really would love to think that the station was empowering people, just to help them, just to help people to realise their own uniqueness and their own potential"* (Cited in Day, 2007).

Since becoming a fully licensed community station in 1995, Near FM has produced over 150 commissioned radio series in a wide variety of formats and genres. These funders include Simon Cumbers, Communicating Europe, Leonardo (EU), Grundtvig (EU) and the BAI Sound & Vision scheme.

Near Media Co-op Mission Statement:

Stands for Radio, Internet, Television and Ancillary activities. These include Near drama Company, Outreach, Media Literacy, Training and Consultation. Our podcast is a very large part of our online offering and we offer an extensive selection of programming online and provide training in podcasting so programme makers can make their own content available online. Other activities are

> *constantly being added to this list such as Near Records a community music label and Near Choice, which offers a second chance to hear selected Near FM talk, drama and arts programmes overnight each weekend. We'll also soon be building a large archive of Near FM programming from over the years. In Ireland, the broadcasting act 2001 made provision for the development of a community television channel for Dublin. Our multi media centre is part of the process of developing content for this initiative.* (NEAR FM)

Additionally, NEAR FM is incorporating the latest developments and trends with their volunteers making use of social media. They have set up @Near FM, @Near TV and others, and one of their key aims is to promote NEAR FM and use it as a public sphere where people can discuss and debate on the merits of community media and its distinctiveness. They were the first to utilise podcasting in terms of communicative action and have invested in www.nearpodcast.org which is an audio and visual record of their podcasts. They embolden programme makers to take responsibility for their own content in podcasts and encourage them to use different social media accounts to stimulate interest in their online content.

Furthermore, they believe this type of interaction will help with building stronger, and more successful, community and voluntary relationships. NEAR FM also operate NEAR TV Productions based in the local Coolock Development Centre. They do stress that it is not a TV station: "*Programmes are provided to Dublin City Television, and made available on our website, www.near.ie. We also operate a community IT facility from the CDC, where we provide IT training to the community. We don't do ECDL, but we do offer training in internet surfing, using email, and how best to access information from the internet.*"

They run interactive and practical media skills training for Radio interviewing which allows participants to take control of the microphone in a safe and supportive environment. This training is offered to community organisations, businesses and beginners wishing to learn new skills. The staff also assist with 'dealing with all the anxieties involved in interviewing' and with their encouragement, participants swiftly gain confidence. Each participant has to record a short interview and listen for feedback. The station also runs interactive and practical media skills training for radio and podcast production for volunteers.

In terms of public health coverage, the station has a number of programmes dealing with public health issues. **Ciaran Murray** is Overall Near Media Co-op Coordinator and has been with the station for 26 years. In terms of public health coverage he has this to say:

> *We cover many areas of public health in our programming. Our morning programme 'Lifeline' specifically targets health and wellbeing. We endeavour that health is understood in the very broadest terms, and the environment is part of this because we are situated in an area of*

social disadvantage. It is absolutely essential that we engage with health issues that are pertinent to our area.

Mental and physical well-being in the broadest sense are tackled: yoga; the importance of a well-balanced diet; sporting activities. Environmental factors like green spaces for leisure and play are crucial in an area of deprivation like ours. Our talk content can include short health inserts, interviews around cycling or hiking, fishing, bee keeping, fishing, animal rescue. Interviews can also focus around reading, theatre and community centres as part of pass time activities of guests and listeners.

We have built up contacts with many health groups, support and campaigning groups. We give air-time to promoting their work, helping them explain their case to a wider audience, and to celebrate their successes. We make this material available as podcasts and also promote it on social media. The social media can be successful too, but the origin is the radio studio recording.

Formats can vary from one-on-one. We do interviews with individuals who are or have been ill, and want to tell their own stories. This is very popular with the community and environs. To compliment these sort of personal stories we have medical professions and also academics who have done research into the particular issue being discussed. We also run outside broadcasts and they are extremely popular and generally relate to issues like loneliness and difficulties with accessing supports in the community.

The overall aim is aligned with that of our mission statement including areas like: to promote local positive stories, to be a tool for positive social change, to empower, to promote diversity and to build a better world. Inequality in health and access to health, or health provision, is an area that we believe to be a key challenge in health. The privatisation of health services, and downgrading of state health services is something that we endeavour to highlight, and to give a voice to local people who are campaigning for better health services.

These areas are often not given much coverage in mainstream media coverage. In some ways, while we do not have the resources of professional journalism, we do have more freedom to concentrate on local issues, and issues that mainstream media overlook. For example, we are situated next door to a lone parents centre, we are a community organisation like them, and we attend all their events. We sit on the same local forums, and we have similar aims, (improving the lot of local people) When they come into our radio station, they do so as colleagues, as friends, and even partners. This isn't something that can happen at national professional journalism level.

Health promotion from the statutory bodies tends to always look in the direction of mainstream media, through PR firms or press releases. We are working at grassroots level, but sometimes this means we are almost invisible when it comes to major state health campaigns, or at best we are a late addition. This means that we cannot shape our plans and resources to match this, and therefore cannot play the type of role we would like.

There is always the question of resources, and in some ways this is matched to the above. We operate much of what we do on a shoestring, and the creative effort in staying afloat can drain the creativity from areas like programme making. Some small elements of funding could change this, and this could be done with a minor change in public policy when it comes to state Health Promotion campaigns. Take for example libraries, they are often included in health campaigns, so community media could be added to the list like libraries, and be included in plans early.

In some ways our audience are also our programme makers. With an access policy, anyone who wants can get involved and make programmes. We have a presenter, Andrew Reid, who got involved through training we ran with the Central Remedial Clinic, (CRC) and we make programmes with the CRC. Andrew presents a music programme, but when it comes to issues on disabilities, this is a presenter who has a very clear understanding of the issues, so he can be presenter, guest and audience.

Another example would be the people who got involved from the 'forget me not' choir who support and highlight dementia. Karen Meenan has produced a few series related to this issue, and here is a sample, Voyage Around My Brain is a weekly series exploring Brain Health. This week, John Gore-Grimes, a retired arctic explorer who is living with memory loss, and his wife award winning artist Kate Byrne, chat to Neuroscientist Francesca Farina about what it is really like living with Dementia. https://nearfm.ie/podcast/voyage-around-my-brain-karen-meenan/

We always try to include access to broadcasting as something that underpins what we do. For example, a TV piece, The Health Effect, grew from a series of radio interviews and outside broadcasts. This was a collaborative project with the Northside Partnership and other local groups. It looks at health inequalities and the effects of positive social projects. http://neartv.ie/the-health-effect/ (Murray, 2022)

Debbie McMahon is with the station for 20 year and produces, presents and coordinates the daily health and wellbeing show *Lifeline*, and assists with the

outside broadcast. She also trains the new volunteers and the students who come to station for work experience.

Lifeline is our Health, Lifestyle & Wellbeing programme that goes out Monday to Friday for the past sixteen years. We have covered most topics on the show, and my main interest would be mental health. We also do a lot of work with the organisations who help people with their mental health, like Pieta House, Samaritans and Suicide or Survive. I personally like to talk to people about their own story, I feel as a community station we can give a platform for these people to let their voice be heard. If you would like to listen back to any of our interviews, they are up on podcast, click on Near FM, listen again and go to Lifeline. The one particular interview that I found very hard to speak about was with Jackie Fox. Jackie lost her daughter who took her own life because of bullying online and being attacked constantly verbally and physically by a group of girls that she knew. Her Mam came on the show to tell her story and to fight for a law to be brought in to stop bullying online called Coco's law.

The aim of Lifeline is to help provide information to our listeners & to let them have the chance to tell their own story. When we speak about a certain subject, we provide helpline numbers & information throughout the show & also give that information out at the end as well. Over the sixteen years we have gained trust from organisations that we regularly keep in contact with. We like to go out to different organisations as well when we can, especially if they have an event taking place. Over the years we have done outside broadcasts with The Irish Wheelchair association, The Central Remedial Clinic, and as you heard last week, Golden Years in Darndale for our older people. We do a lot of work with Beaumont Hospital, every year we cover Honour Your Hero's day on which we get the chance to talk to people who have been through severe illness and come out the other side and they get to tell their story to us.

As you know in Ireland we are great for fundraising, and that's what we try to promote on our programme. When an organisation is having an awareness day we give them the opportunity to get it out on the airwaves, so in that way people can donate and hopefully raise more money. I have regular people that will contact us each year to help raise awareness, and to give them a plug for the upcoming events, as I'm typing this, I'm organising an interview with The Dickie Dip which takes place 5th Nov to promote Men's health and raise money. I really enjoy doing personal stories & feel I can give the time & empathy to the guest involved & to me this is all about community radio.

Most of my interviews are live so people can text or phone in & ask a question while the guest is in the studio, just one I did last week was with a local young mother who has two young children & recently being diagnosed with Breast cancer, she came in to talk about young women checking for lumps on their breast as Mammograms are not available until your 50 years old here in Ireland, and she was also trying to raise money to buy a wig which can be very expensive. She was such a lovely strong lady, and the way she spoke about being strong for her children and fighting this disease brought a tear to my eye. Have a listen to that interview if you get a chance. We have a lot of local people coming in to tell their own story which can be of help to the listeners.

George Mulcahy also works on *Lifeline* and he has been with the station for 20 years and is a presenter, producer, trainer, and researcher:

Lifeline is Near FM's Health, Lifestyle and Wellbeing programme broadcast five mornings a week and is now in its sixteenth year. In that time the programme has covered all of the aspects of its remit and continues to give a voice to those who have little or no access to mainstream media. The areas that I have covered extensively over the years have been vast and varied. I have given special attention to organisations who support those in recovery from addiction, those who provide support for those who have been bereaved by suicide and for those who have lost a child, as well as those who have to live with conditions that need to be managed such as Arthritis, Coeliac's Disease and ADHD. I have also tried to offer a platform for those that encourage physical activity for those of all ages, as well as giving a voice to those who live with visual impairment.

The aim of the programme is to help provide information to our listeners that they may struggle to find elsewhere. When subjects are covered on the programme, we endeavour to try and provide the listener with as much information as we can, and by giving a voice to those who have experienced challenges in their lives and how those challenges are managed. We have built up an extensive network of links over the years and that has helped provide organisations working inside the programmes remit to carry on telling their story rather than relying on a ten second soundbite. Whenever possible we try to go out to these organisations and talk to their service users directly. One of our many success stories is our continued involvement with Beaumont Hospital. An example of that is our coverage of the annual Honour Your Hero's event that we have been covering for many years. This allows us the opportunity to engage with people who have been through severe trauma and to let them tell their story in their own words.

Community Radio Youghal

Community Radio Youghal went on air in 1995 and was one of eleven stations licensed by the BAI under the pilot scheme for community radio stations. They are non-profit and rely heavily on the goodwill of the community and businesses in the area to provide them with funding and resources. CRY104FM broadcasts to Youghal Town and environs of East Cork and West Waterford on 104fm 7 days a week from 8am to 12am. They broadcast to 15,000 listeners on air and online both nationally and internationally with their live streaming. The station's website offers up to date community news, photographs, the weekly schedule and access to their podcasts. They have a strong social media presence , 10,000 followers, with YouTube, Facebook, twitter and Instagram accounts. They offer 1-2euro packages for a 30 second advertisement which is scripted, voiced and mixed by the team. The weekly cash draw assists with the upkeep of the station and Youghal community bus. The station is supported by BCI, Pobal (government supporting communities), Department of Rural and Community development, Cork County Council, SECAD and SICAP. The station's programme schedule includes: Current Affairs, which generally covers local issues. However, they do also cover national issues which impact on the local community: local Sport and coverage of major community sporting events; inclusiveness; the arts; women's issues; local history; specialist musical programmes which have a broad range.

Yvonne Smith is the station's manager and has been working there for 17 years. The station covers a number of public health issues and have bi-monthly programming which includes *Mind Matters*, a programme that covers a wide variety of health issues; *Perspectives* covers disability and carers' support groups; the gay agenda; and domestic violence. Much of these programmes incorporate personal interviews and stories and they receive a good deal of feedback. They also run a *Global Hub* Series. This station also has a number of health professionals who are volunteers at the station, and they bring their expertise to these broadcasts. **Yvonne Smith gives information:**

> *All the Productions mentioned below are both broadcast and available on our websites as podcasts.*

> *Bi-monthly programmes:*

> *<u>Mind Matters</u> presented by Psychotherapist Shane Murphy. The content of the programme aims to provide support and some tools to cope with anxiety and feeling overwhelmed; there are also links given to other support services, the vibe is feel-good and aims to promote positivity.*
>
> *<u>Perspectives</u> – with East Cork Disability & Carers Support Group. The programme is presented by Elizabeth Maddox, who is a carer herself. The content advocates for more support for persons with disabilities and their carers; the programme features interviews with persons who are coping with disabilities and their interesting stories. There are pieces of advice and support, which is reflective of the target audience.*

The programme provides information and aid in educating the listeners on challenges, while ensuring that the approach is to reflect the positive aspects of life.

<u>Perspectives – The Gay Agenda</u> – this programme is presented by a small team of representatives from the LGBT community. They provide information on health and offer support. The content includes light-hearted discussions and updates on Pride as well as various other relevant events.
Other programmes and information:
We provide updates on the Pandemic in public health announcements. We provide an important numbers section – these are numbers of Samaritans/local doctors/pharmacies/meals on wheels etc. which are broadcast on the advertisement blocks and would go out approx. 8 times per day.The station works with East Cork Domestic Violence and Men's Aid Ireland, we broadcast approx. 8 interviews per annum with information on recognizing domestic violence as well as information on support for those affected.

Global Hub is a 4 part annual series that covers various topics both national and global. This year the series will cover homelessness in both the national and global context. We will explore how people/families become homeless and the impacts on communities. The series will look at climate change/ domestic violence/ poverty/ education/ addiction/ mental health and how these contribute to homelessness. This programme is supported by Trocaire and upholds the values of Trocaire.

Declan Mathews, who is a retired GP, presents a weekly drive time programme – approx. 70% of his interviews are health related, and he has covered various health topics such as menopause.

The aim of all our programming is to be engaging and informative – with the above programmes we work on being relevant and inclusive. We continue to provide information that is accurate and supportive. A lot of how we address issues and topics is based around need, and we maintain a positive approach.

Finbarr Motherway is a retired teacher. He completed 15 weeks of training in production, presenting and interviewing techniques in 2021. He talks about his experience with the station:

I learnt new skills and approached the process with great enthusiasm. Even though I had a career in teaching, I was quite daunted by the prospect of being on air but very quickly overcame my fears. The content on my programme covers requests from the community and it links in with the elderly providing news on local events and music also.

I also presents a one hour monthly programme Killeagh/Inch Monday Club.

The club has 170 members and again links in with elderly people who are isolated and living alone in rural areas of our community. I'm supported by four other group members who source information for the programme. This programme has received very positive feedback and on the back of this programme another group Youghal Active Retirement Group started the process of training and they were able to produce a monthly programme. The training I received and then making programmes has given me a new lease of life and feel I'm doing something positive for my peers and my community. The station also have a third retirement group in West Waterford who have scheduled a meeting to explore how they can reach out to their members and provide a platform for those in the area through community radio.

Sinead Huggins started training in production, presenting, researching and editing programme content in 2020:

My programme provides information on events, sexual health, education for the LGBTQ+. The show runs monthly for one hour and provides a platform for a marginalised sector that do not get this kind of support in mainstream media. The programme is driven by me and two other members of the group and it breaks down the barriers and supports inclusiveness and acceptance. I'm very grateful for having the opportunity to broadcast these types of programmes and they're on podcast too and I'd have a regular stream of listeners. I've learnt new skills and the whole process has developed a very strong link between the station and the LGBTQ+ community

2.7 Obstacles to Good Public Health Practice

Near FM

Arguably one of the main public debates right now is the cost of living crisis. Some organisations have to rely more on their own fundraising rather than other revenue streams, as we all tighten our belts and venture into an uncertain future. Lifeline gives these organisations the opportunity to inform our listeners of planned events that they can take part in and contribute to and in some cases can offer their services as volunteers. We know that volunteering can play an important role in a person's personal development as well as being a positive marker on an individual's mental health.

We are a local community radio station that provides content to a certain geographical area and because of that there has been the odd

occasion where an organisation has chosen mass media to get its message across rather than a community resource like ourselves, so involvement can be difficult when it comes to being included in certain national campaigns. Over the years we have managed to build up a large and strong list of contacts with people and the organisations that they represent, but even still we have to work that bit harder to get the kind of visual imprint that the programme needs to provide a service to its fullest potential.

Lifeline is live, so if a listener wishes to ask a question or raise an important point that needs discussing, they can send in a text and engage in that way. Our listeners are our story. Many of the segments we have covered on Lifeline come from the experiences of local people who wish to tell their stories in the hope that it will help others who have been through similar experiences.

Despite very good examples cited here, Boyle feels overall national discourses on public health are not covered in CR:

There isn't a pairing of the national discourses on public health and CR, not really and it would nearly be worth taking a sample on a day to compare the level of detail of a national news bulletin and the snippets CR take from it. They would completely ignore it because they are much more comfortable dealing with issues like local deaths, local stuff that concerns the wellbeing of the community around them. You're dealing with volunteers. Some stations are very good at driving media literacy, training and development, very good at getting funding but they'll have full time managers and maybe training development officers that are funded by Pobal.

Those involved in health tend to opt for the commercial stations unless they have a particular interest in, or experience of, CR. Stations tend not to take on controversial subjects, they are very conservative in what they discuss on air and wary of breaching BAI codes and rules. They have a very strict interpretation of impartiality and balance. Essentially they don't have the confidence to tackle these issues – we don't feel like we're equipped to do it correctly so we won't touch it sort of idea. What matters to them most is what's of local importance and there is a sense of you can get news of what's happening nationally on commercial or PSB. (Boyle)

Health initiatives are being rolled out and participation with other stakeholders, in the Community, and is a key component. However, Boyle points out:

Community radio do not have the resources or time to pick up on this. We're seeing in Sound and Vision more targeted rounds of funding that help drive that. So not only do we have ringfenced rounds for CR –

this has been extended to climate change. We've never had this before in terms of actual programmes and outputs. We had a Covid round as well which community were a part of and was similar to a normal round of sound and vision but the programmes and output had to have some contributions towards the covid discussion. So that's been done and there's nothing stopping us, this can be done again. Stations know how to put in an application and really rely on that funding and that's been successful in driving the right behaviour. There's nothing stopping us being directed by the minister to do a round on public health. Pobal would probably say the same in terms of the Community Services Programme which is being completely reviewed as well, it's current iteration is coming towards the end and they'll have a new tiered system in CSP from next year, whereas at the moment CR are lumped in together. Public goods, public services like health are being extended to include media as well.

The Future Media Commission report has 50 recommendations, 49 of which the government says it accepts in principle – we're waiting to see what that means and if the government realise all those recommendations. Then there'll be much funding for contested rounds like sound and Vision and much more targeted rounds as well.

Community Radio Youghal

There are several challenges with public health – waiting lists and access to health care can be of major concern, and most commonly complained of regarding health services. The staffing is an issue with overstretched and overworked health staff. As a community station we don't get into the politics and are careful in approaching the topics, we do have interviews with local TD's and councillors who are asked about these issues.

I feel we possibly do not cover these topics fully as we do worry about the backlash, we are funded by the government and often don't want to get into these matters. Internally, we do not have presenters to adequately cover these topics (Smith, 2022)

In community radio, I think if we had a direct point of contact within health services that would provide information and allowed us to broadcast that, we would provide better overall coverage.

We use feedback from our listeners as indicators to guide the content of our programmes. We work with the groups the programmes are dealing with to ensure we are being inclusive and that the content is relevant. In The Perspective, Global Hub, Mind Matters programmes,

the target groups themselves control the content as they are better suited to provide programmes that are engaging and address topics and issues that provide support and information. We work closely with two active retirement groups, St Raphael's Centre for persons with intellectual disabilities and the local primary schools. These groups engage in creating and training with the station. For the feature pieces we cover, the initiative comes from us, and we look at the demographic of our audience. We also look at how we can incorporate all our community, and our aim is to be accessible to everyone in it.

3. Recommendations

Based on the examples articulated in this report, there is evidence of good Media Literacy on Public Health, particularly in some of the larger stations. Whilst stations are active in terms of looking for funding, there are some that are experiencing difficulties as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. A large number of health professionals do utilize media platforms for dissemination of health information and articulate concisely the complexities involved in physical and mental health issues. However, they do tend to gravitate towards public service and commercial broadcasting platforms. The majority of individuals working in the stations are volunteers and those broadcasting in rural areas do not have links with public health professionals, which is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Indeed Liam Boyle (BAI) addresses this in his interview and sees that there is no reason why the Sound and Vision Scheme cannot include a round on public health literacy. However, competing in the various rounds of S & V scheme requires skill and time and not all stations have the necessary competencies to take part in this. Within this so called 'information society' or 'digital age' new skills and new literacies are required. Alternative sites of learning, like community media, can offer a sheltered ecosystem where these can flourish.

Aspects to be included in a 2-day workshop should cover the issue of 'fear' which has been expressed by CM broadcasters around the issue of covering particular health topics. Station volunteers are fearful of tackling controversial topics and imagine all kinds of potential consequences. This is partly due to the lack of participation, or indeed recognition, on the part of Health services, and health professionals can be included here also. It can also be said that the inherent fear of tackling controversial and politically sensitive health issues may very well be 'fear of authority', a post-colonial legacy which is a strong factor in Irish public service life. Furthermore, where people express reluctance to be what might be seen as controversial, there is a danger that community media may have difficulties in terms of fulfilling their role in health literacy.

There was a reluctance on the part of some stations to engage with the researcher, others approached with trepidation. This is upsetting because most of the stations do some very good work. In light of the lack of awareness among professional health managers this reporter recommends training for community media stakeholders in Innovative and comprehensive marketing in terms of

promoting the 'distinctiveness' of CM and tapping in to the needs of the communities. Encouragement and reassurance are key.

For example, stations could run a poster competition, within the community, in order to design a leaflet detailing the role of CM with a view to distributing to health centres which every county in Ireland has, to hostels, Men's Sheds which are springing up all over the country and other advocacy groups. These skills could then be passed on to other stations who are struggling with linking in to public health services.

The report is timely because there is an enormous drive to move away from the large central health service to more manageable community based services. All the reports on public health reiterate the need to link in with voluntary organisations. Those health professionals who have been interviewed for the purposes of this report are now keenly aware of community media but unless there is follow-up there is a danger this awareness will dissipate.

The aim of the workshop:

- To bring public health professionals and community media stakeholders together in order to navigate the terrain of public health information and strengthen competencies in the presentation of relevant discourses

Potential activities for The workshop:

- Health literacy is not the sole responsibility of the station
- Stations to be encouraged to build partnerships to include public health stakeholders and sources embedded in the community, among individuals and organisations, that facilitate cooperation and collaboration
- Develop the capacity to disseminate health information that is accurate , accessible and easy to understand – with emphasis on the fact that all individuals, regardless of how educated they may be, are at risk of misunderstanding health information if the subject matter is emotionally charged or complex
- Progress shared interests through community participation, selecting priority items for community health – push for integration with voluntary and advocacy groups, and local medical clinics which can be most effective in helping to achieve good public health literacy.
- Public Health communication alone is not enough, the development of an action plan in order to create understandable and actionable health information
- Emphasis to be put on the ability to use health information rather than just understand it
- Negotiation strategies to develop such an appropriate action plan
- Ensure health literacy is culturally and linguistically appropriate and motivating

- Adding online links to a station's website that provide easy access to practical information, always keeping in mind the digital divide
- Sharing good practice examples like the 'social benefits' template used by some stations
- Building Innovative information campaigns

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Health Professionals Consulted for this Report

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Spain

1. Overview national level discourse on Public Health

1.1 National level discourse on Public Health

National level discourse on Public Health: topics of discussion and core challenges to be tackled ahead

In terms of national level discourse on public health, several issues (e.g., the impact of urban pollution on health and wellbeing, increasing mental health issues on population, environmental factors affecting cardiovascular diseases, etc.) appear to be discussed on public arena because of several investigations conducted in academia and research institutes. Thus, public institutions and a short sample of newspapers, audiovisual and digital media, have echoed the main findings of recent research on the relationship between **public health, people's wellbeing, childhood development and environmental conditions in urban contexts**. For instance, several studies conducted in the city of Barcelona have the association between exposure to traffic-related air pollution and noise during pregnancy and childhood, and whole-brain connectivity (Pérez-Crespo et al., 2022; Binter et al., 2022). These studies stress that children exposed to high levels of air pollution in their first years of life display changes in brain connectivity, which might be related also with neurodevelopmental disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism spectrum disorder (Mortamais et a., 2019). Another study conducted also in Spain shows that exposure to air pollution during Pregnancy appear to be also associated with growth delays in the first years of life (Fossaty et al., 2020).

Consequently, there is increasing - but not sufficient - public awareness over the developmental health issues among children, including emotional and behavioural problems (e.g., attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) that often impose lasting harmful effects on children's lives and considerable social and economic burdens. Scientific evidence on how urban environment impacts citizens' health lead also to the development of numerous of local and regional policy programmes aiming at improving the quality of urban spaces, reducing car pollution, and increasing natural spaces that foster active lifestyles.

A second health issue that has raised to the public arena relates to **mental health**. The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted mental health conditions, which calls for urgent action for intervention, prevention, and readiness. During the COVID-19, certain groups of population suffered from high levels of stress during lockdowns, which might lead to anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions (Goldberg et al., 2021). Many experts, media, and some politicians have stressed that mental health issues (e.g., anxiety, depression

disorders), become an unknown emerging problem between adolescents and adult patients and the improvement of the public health system is needed to tackle with this situation which is experienced mainly by women. This issue has been also covered by media. For instance, the national digital newspaper "El Diario" published a special issue last summer entitled "the emergence of mental health" (ibid July 2022).

In specific, public authorities have increased the attention to suicide, which represents one of the major causes of unnatural death. In September 2022, The Minister of Health has announced the preparation of a new Risk Conduct Code for attention to suicidal behaviour, to prevent these behaviours and help people to stop suffering. A roadmap is also in preparation to improve the emotional well-being of the population, provide comprehensive care for people with mental health problems, support their families and promote a model of care integral and communitarian that favours recovery and social integration.

One of the latest topics of discussion on public health in Spain relates to the promotion of **healthy and sustainable dietary practices** among children and adult population. Spain has long been associated with Mediterranean and Atlantic diets, both considered two of the healthiest dietary patterns in the world. However, such dietary habits have shifted towards the so-called "Western diet", which has increased rates of overweight and obesity in population, leading to greater incidence of cancer and cardiovascular diseases (González García, 2020). To tackle this problem, Spain's Consumer Affairs Minister launched a campaign aiming at promoting healthy lifestyles among Spanish population. However, this policy has been highly criticized in commercial media, especially in the right-wing media ecosystem due to the influence that meat lobby has on policy and media. Thus, recent studies on advertising in media in Spain showed an over-representation of unhealthy food products in media (e.g., ultra-processed foods) which also employ more persuasive strategies (Cerezo et al., 2022). Further, the food industry employs frequently radio personalities, journalists and radio hosts, as prescribers or claims in food-related advertisements which, according to some experts, means illicit endorsement or advertising, due to the social influence and recognition as public opinion leaders (García Arranz, 2021).

1.2 Which information gaps do the public experience?

Information gaps identified by experts and participants in the study

The impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic** is still a theme of discussion in the public health area. Nonetheless, the increasing sources of information about this pandemic as well as the diversity of online information and the impact of social media, have not contributed to increase citizen's scientific literacy. On the contrary, a sector of the population remains still discontent with the actuation of public institutions or appear to be reluctant concerning vaccination policies. Specifically, the phenomena of **fake news, disinformation** and the emergence of sources of pseudo-medicine strengthened during the crisis of COVID-19. For example, one study on COVID-19 conducted in Spain found that one-third of the false information about the pandemic contained falsehoods about scientific and

health-related matters and identified four main types of hoaxes: joke, exaggeration, decontextualization, and deception (Salaverría et al., 2019).

These increasing **phenomena of disinformation** on health has become a challenge for the healthcare system. For instance, a recent survey conducted in 2021 by the initiative #SaludsinBulos ("Health without hoaxes") found that information about heath I media is very inaccurate or unreliable, without rigorous work contrasting sources of information. In addition, health professionals perceive that massive access to information causes the patient to be more distrustful of doctor's knowledge. This widespread misinformation among patients, and lack of verified media, forces specialists to spend consultation time denying false information, which also may influence the willingness of patients to follow a medical prescription to deal with their diseases.

Several of the experts interviewed in this study focus on the topic of the underfunding of research in **women's health issues** that, consequently, means one of the biggest lacks of information on health care. Women represent half of the Spanish population and workforce as well as they are the principal caregivers in households. Notwithstanding, specific diseases are suffered by women population and treatments are not still efficient, so as more research is needed. This is the case of cardiovascular diseases, rheumatoid arthritis, fertility issues, depression or mental illness. Although it is well-known the importance of social factors in health (such as gender, socialization, income), the specialist or general media do not usually cover those factors as health determinants. Digital newspapers like "The Guardian" have made echoes of this issue with a report entitled "'Women have been woefully neglected: does medical science have a gender problem?". Gender bias in medicine has been also lightly covered by Spanish media, for example in Newtral (2021) but, according to the experts consulted, this issue still means a relevant gap of knowledge for population and even women suffering these diseases.

1.3 Where could CM fill its role as an information provider engaging local communities around PH?

The role of Community media as an information provider engaging local communities around public health

The key issues the Spanish press has followed included cancer, sexuality and reproduction, aids, drugs (including tobacco), mental disorders and nutrition-related issues. However, media concentration favoured information homogeneity and thus, health issues are rarely dealt in an independent way, or in its own specific space or by specialized professionals, except a few public and commercial media. Otherwise, there a recurrent and inadequate informative treatment from the media about people with disabilities, for example, using concepts with an implicit pejorative meaning or stigmatizing informative treatment for the people with functional diversity or suffering mental illness. Thus, health literacy is an important field of action for community media to address disadvantaged or marginalized citizens in the local environments.

A few studies in the field of community media have explored whether community radios are sources of information that can be used as an instrument of social education and, specifically, if they can be resources for rehabilitation and recovery in people with disabilities, or even with population diagnosed with a severe mental disorder and chronic diseases (Sande & Leal, 2015; García & Meda, 2012; Lema-Blanco, 2018; Rodríguez Herrero, 2018; Vecchia Pereira, 2019). These studies show that, in their daily activity, Spanish community radio stations have opened their microphones to groups usually excluded or stereotyped by the media, as young people, people with mental illness, or people in prison, which facilitate the social inclusion of these groups, helping to break down stereotypes, prejudices and self-stigmas (Lema-Blanco, 2018).

According to the study "youth and third media sector in Spain" (Barranquero et al., 2015), the results of the survey conducted showed highlight the high participation in these media (as producers or associates) of neighbourhood groups, educational communities (69.1%), social movements (76%), NGOs (64.8%), youth (75%) and women (70%). These media also acknowledge giving voice to other minority groups such as people with functional diversity or mental health (55.3%) or the prison population (43%). Within the frame of the present study, it was explored to what extend public health is being covered in community radios and the findings show that many of these media have entire programmes - or specific sections- aiming at increasing information and awareness about health. Many of these radio programmes are run by specialists or professionals of the public health care system (e.g., doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, etc.)

In many cities and towns there are radio shows in community radios run by people diagnosed with mental disorder, some of them supported by professionals and others do not. There are radio projects linked to public mental health programmes, while others are promoted by private associations or institutions. The main goal of these radio projects is to create spaces for interaction and social listening that enhance the autonomy and signification of people affected by this illness. Some of these shows are leaded independently by the people who suffer from the disorders (e.g., *Radio Nikosia* in Catalonia or *Radio Prometea* in A Coruña), like in others institutional therapists are involved in the process of production and dissemination of the programmes. Some authors have highlighted the emancipatory potential of CM, by favouring empowerment processes of participants, both individually and collectively (García and Meda, 2012:11-12).

2. Overview national Community Media landscape

2.1 Mapping the environment

The national legal framework within which the community media operate

In Spain there is a long tradition of community media since the beginning of the transition to democracy, especially in the autonomous communities with a strong partnership tradition such as in Catalonia, Andalusia or the Basque Country (Meda, 2013). Since the early 80s there have also been media which

define themselves as «free» and try to ensure their independence by rejecting any form of public or private funding (Pérez, 2012). In terms of the conceptualization of the current Spanish Community media landscape, these associative or citizen media are characterised by being privately owned media, with the status of non-profit entities, whose main mission is to provide communication services to meet the specific social, cultural and communication needs of local communities and social groups, as well as to promote citizen media participation and supporting citizens' associative fabric. Community media are characterised by encouraging citizen participation in both the ownership of the medium and in its management, which involves programming, administration, operation, financing and evaluation.

Although the existence of citizen-owned media in Spain is inferred from the 1978 Constitution, which recognises and protects the right "to freely express and disseminate thoughts, ideas and opinions by speech, writing or any other means of reproduction" (Article 20.1.a), the evolution of all these local initiatives has been held back by a plethora of political and legal obstacles which have been to the detriment of their consolidation, especially in matters such as frequencies, funding and public support. Spanish legislation did not correctly develop community media sector, which suffered from elevate vulnerability and unequal position, due to several barriers and administrative restriction. The past General Law on Audio-visual Communication (LGCA, 2010) for the first time recognized the existence of non-profit-making audio-visual and community services but did not develop specific regulations for the concession of licences and State promotion of the third sector. That means that although community media's right to exist is stated in the laws, those media remain in an illegal situation, as they cannot obtain a broadcasting license. Consequently, numerous local television and radio stations have been operating in the last four decades without any legal support or administrative concession, except limited cases. Indeed, this has motivated some sanction procedures against some free radio stations and community television stations (Lema-Blanco, 2020; Bergés, 2012).

The recently published General Law on Audio-visual Communication (Law 13/2022, of July 13 - LGCA), which replaces the one approved in 2010, represents an improvement in the recognition of the rights of non-profit community audio-visual communication services. First, the Law sets up that *"the plurality of audio-visual communication will be promoted through the promotion of the existence of a set of media, both public and privately owned and community, which reflect the ideological and political pluralism and the cultural and linguistic diversity of society"*.

The **Article 2.15 of the new legislation** defines community audio-visual media as follows:

> *"Non-profit community television or radio audiovisual communication service: Service of a non-economic nature provided by private non-profit organizations or entities, under the terms provided in this law, through any technological modality and that offers proximity content intended for to respond to the specific social, cultural and*

> *communication needs of the communities and social groups. These services are covered based on open, clear and transparent access criteria regarding broadcasting, production and management, ensuring the maximum citizen participation and pluralism*[129].

One of the most relevant advances of this new legislation concerns the **Third Transitory Provision**, which specifically focuses on non-profit community television and radio services, which acknowledges the **right of existing CR to access directly to a FM licence** in the following terms:

> *"Non-profit community television and radio audiovisual communication services through terrestrial Hertzian waves that prove their uninterrupted operation for the last five years, without having caused interference problems, and intend to continue their activity, may request, within a period of six months from the entry into force of this law, the granting of the corresponding enabling title to the competent regional audiovisual authority, in accordance with the availability of the radio spectrum. For these purposes, the competent state authority in terms of planning and management of the radio spectrum will reserve the public radio domain necessary for the provision of these services"*

In conclusion, the absence of an appropriate regulatory framework (the new Law needs to be still developed and implemented in the following moths/year), as well as an inadequate funding model for community media, has been detrimental to the sector's economic and social sustainability, leaving them in an extraordinarily weak position compared to their European counterparts. Thus, while in countries such as Ireland, France, Austria or Germany, associative radio and television stations are legally protected and financially supported by the Administration, in Spain these media seem to be condemned to perpetual amateurism. The weakness of the CM sector also undermines citizens' right to be informed through various sources, especially in the audio-visual field, where television and radio continue to be the media most used by citizens. Hopefully, the new legal context promising scenario for the development of the Spanish community media sector.

The explicit recognition in Law of Community Media as relevant actors for media literacy and media training programmes might turn into new sources of funding and increase their financial and social sustainability, allowing them to employ a respectable number of journalists, social communicators and cultural promoters.

129 In original Spanish: Servicio de comunicación audiovisual televisivo o radiofónico comunitario sin ánimo de lucro: Servicio de carácter no económico prestado por organizaciones o entidades privadas sin ánimo de lucro, en los términos previstos en esta ley, a través de cualquier modalidad tecnológica y que ofrece contenidos de proximidad destinados a dar respuesta a las necesidades sociales, culturales y de comunicación específicas de las comunidades y de los grupos sociales a los que da cobertura, basándose en criterios abiertos, claros y transparentes de acceso respecto a la emisión, la producción y la gestión, asegurando la máxima participación ciudadana y el pluralismo.

Profile / organisation of Community Media in that country (how many, what kind, any national associations in general?)

In Spain there is some controversy between the citizen-owned radio stations regarding the use of the terms “free radio” and “community radio”. There are radios that use both terms interchangeably to define themselves, while other stations understand that they are two different typologies due to the political vision of these media. Thus, according to a study conducted by García-García (2013) it could be estimated that between 200 and 300 radio stations in Spain can be listed as free and community radio stations, educational and university radio stations and others of a cultural or social nature (around 10%), among which at least a hundred would be free and community radio stations (ibid, pp.116).

Around 70 of these media promoted the formation of the “**Red de Medios Comunitarios” (ReMC, the State Network of Community Media)** in 2005, gathering around 70 radio and television projects. This network had a very active role in the debates around the new audio-visual law and is legally formalized as a national association of free and community media. Most of them have also legal figure as associations, federations or cooperatives that operate at the local level. In 2009, REMC (https://medioscomunitarios.net/) became a federation of TV and radio community media from all over the country—some of them in existence since the return to democracy in the late 1970s. The federation gave greater visibility to these media although the number of associates decreased in the last years due to the difficulties of the small radios and independent televisions to keep alive their projects. The network represents nowadays around 40 media, most of them are radios broadcasting in FM and Internet.

With minor influence at the political level, the **Free Radio Network** (https://radioslibres.info/) gathers around 20 media which define themselves as self-managed, non-professional, independent of any group of political pressure (parties and unions) or economic layer (free of commercial advertising or public funds). Similar to CM, they are self-managed local initiatives at the service to the community where they are integrated, and free, finally, to spread any opinion.

Furthermore, free and community media are organized in different regional associations or federations. For example, in Madrid, the Unión de Radios Libres y Comunitarias de Madrid (The **Union of Free and Community Radios of Madrid)** is a federation created to coordinate and improve the performance of existing community and free radios. In Andalucía, several community radios are also involved in the **Association of Municipal and Citizen Radio and Television Stations of Andalusia-EMA-RTV**. In Catalonia the Xarxa de Ràdios Comunitàries de Barcelona (XRCB) is made up of 60 FM or digital stations articulated on the /xrcb.cat/ platform that broadcasts continuous programming that is fed by the contents of all the radio stations that are part of the network.

Although they are not strictly considered community media but educative media, university radio has undergone an important expansion in the last two decades. Spanish university radios are created and funded mainly by public universities that on 2011 founded the **Association of University Radios of Spain** (ARU). This

network agglutinates 34 entities with a wide range of models and contents: since radios created with strict training goals (that only allow the participation of students the university) to others that aims to build bridges between university community and society, open to the participation of anonymous citizens, associations or NGOs.

How are community media reflected in the Media Pluralism Monitor

The last Media Pluralism Monitor Report for Spain (MPM 2022) includes community media in several indicators. First, the indicator "**access to media**" for community media is considered "high". The report states that:

> *"Although the legislation on Audiovisual Communication recognizes community media, no community radio or TV has obtained a license since 2010. Meanwhile, these media are broadcasting illegally. Besides, the independence of community media is not guaranteed by the law" (ibid, pp.16)*

In terms of **risks to media pluralism**, although any difference have been settled concerning CM, the Media Pluralism Monitor reports restrictions to the right to information and freedom of expression. Apart from that, Spain also faces an inconvenient situation in relation to transparency of news media ownership and ownership concentration, especially in audiovisual markets. Audiences' concentration at TV market as well as concentration of advertising revenues in both audiovisual and online markets implies also risk for media pluralism.

The indicator on the **protection of freedom of expression** remains at a medium risk level, affecting also social communicators and people involved in CM. Thus, the last reforms of the Penal Code and Organic Law 4/2015 introduced limitations to this right that have been denounced by national and international organizations. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) condemned Spain in 2021 for judicial decisions due to "interferences by public powers in the right to freedom of expression" (pp.9)

Are community media referring specifically to specific MIL concepts in their practical work (training, production, other)?

The practice of Spanish community media sector shows its educational capacity as informal areas of media training. Specially community radios have been instigators of media literacy programmes within their interest communities as well as within the networks around which the sector is organized in Spain (e.g., the national network of Community Media- ReMC). In the Spanish context, the pioneering research "Youth and the Third Communication Sector in Spain" (Barranquero et al., 2015), elaborated a mapping of the existing third media sector experiences in the Spanish context. Researchers assess the involvement of young people in community media, exploring training processes implemented in these media. The findings of this study show that almost 80% of community radios in Spain develop processes of media literacy (79.6%; n= 54). These activities are oriented to new members and volunteers, as well as regular members, to whom propose "specialized training".

In terms of the content of this training, community radios display a combination of lectures (about topics like community media and communication rights, communication for social change) with practical knowledge (production and development of audio-visual content, photography, writing), technical skills (mixing boards, editing, specific software for broadcasting and podcasting creation) Occasionally, social and management abilities have been also addressed in specific trainings and internal activities (Lema Blanco et al., 2016; Lema-Blanco, 2018).

TRAINING OFFERED IN COMMUNITY MEDIA	
Introductory training	Training programme
Support training	Mentoring, supervision and peer support
Radio workshops	For non-members
Specialised training	For all partners (Lectures and technical training)
LEARNING PERCEIVED BY YOUTH	
Theory, conceptual learning	Lectures and technical training on communication/editing, radio comments/realization and community media or communication rights
Attitudinal learning	New values, attitudes such as solidarity, commitment, volunteerism, empowerment
Procedural learning/Skills	Skills acquired through exchange of practices and new tools production (conflict management, teamwork), social skills

Table 1: Training activities performed by community radio/Learning experiences perceived by young radio activist in Spain (focus group analysis). (Source: Lema-Blanco, 2018)

Formal and informal agreements between social organizations and educative institutions and community radios have allowed children, youngest and adult people to have significant broadcasting experiences in radio stations with a previous basic training in production and communication subjects. Onda Merlin (Madrid), Onda Color (Málaga), RTVC (Cardedeu), Cuac FM (A Coruña), or the

"Radio School project" developed by the Union of Free and Community Radio in Madrid (URCM) are some of the examples of media with extended experience in engaging communities in media literacy and radio training programmes. Finally, community media become valuable instruments for the development of meaningful media and social skills that are transferable to professional contexts (mainly for those who work for the audio-visual sector).

2.2 Extracting CMs role and impact

Several examples of radio shows around public health have been found in the Spanish community media sector, as referred in the first chapter of this report. Thus, in this section we will introduce five long-lasting good examples of successful radio programmes around different public health issues. Thus, these selected shows are also conducted in radio stations with a special sensibility regarding heath issues. All of them have our had (in the past) with several programmes specially dedicated to public health in its broad sense, including occupational health, mental health or health education. All of them count among their collaborators scientists and/or experts in the socio-health sector.

Four community media have been studied for the purposes of this study: (1) Onda Color (Palma-Palmilla District, City of Málaga); (2) Onda Merlín Comunitaria (Dictrict of Villaverde. Municipality of Madrid); (3) Radio Almenara (Dictrict of Ventilla. Municipality of Madrid), and (4) Cuac FM (City of A Coruña).

Four community radio activists were interviewed, all of them involved in the production and broadcasting of health-related radio shows, as follows:

> **JUAN QUERO-PERABÁ**. Family doctor in the Andalusian public health system. Director of *El Árbol de la Vida* on the community radio station "Onda Color" in Malaga.
>
> **ALEJANDRO SÁNCHEZ BARDANCA**. Nurse at the Public University Hospital in A Coruña. Member of the Spanish Association of Nursing in Cardiology. Producer and host of the programme *Cuidado Corazón"* on CUAC FM, the community radio station of A Coruña.
>
> **JOSE MANUEL MÍNGUEZ**. Manager of Onda Merlín Comunitaria. Also involved in the production of *Ábrete Camino* radio Show in OMC, Madrid.
>
> **ARIANA FERNÁNDEZ PALOMO**. Pharmacist. Member of the National Association of Health Journalists. Director of *La Ciencia es Femenino*, on CUAC FM.

Together with the previous experts, we have interviewed a fifth professional who is an expert in public health and health awareness. Dr. **SERGIO EDUARDO SANTOS DEL RIEGO** is professor at the University of A Coruña (UDC) and member of the Galician Council for Social Wellbeing (Xunta de Galicia). He is the director of the UDC's Health Awareness Office, dedicated to scientific literacy and promotion of the health: habits, routines and healthy lifestyles, skills for the life; and prevention of the illness.

Community Media and radio programmes involved in the study

Desktop research and observation have been conducted on several community radio stations in order to comprehend to what extent and in what formats health information was covered in these media. Following, a small online survey was launched within the associates of the national community media network (ReMC). Questions risen in the survey aimed to identify which are the radio stations who largest effort have done in covering health-related information and find out a number of radio shows that could be pointed as best practices. Only 14 radios filled the questionnaire, finding that 7 radio stations counted with two or more programmes fully dedicated to public health issues: Onda Merlín Comunitaria, Onda Color, Radio Almenara, Cuac FM, Radio Enlace, Radio Vallekas, Ecoleganés. Among them, several interviews were conducted to get in-depth knowledge on these diverse media practices in terms of contents, formats, participants and targeted audience. These examples of *best practices* are described as follows:

ONDA MERLÍN COMUNITARIA- OMC Radio (https://www.omcradio.org) is the community radio station of the Villaverde district (Madrid). It was created in 1987 as a non-profit association with strong and solid linkages with the social and neighbourhood fabric of the district. OMC Radio develops several radio shows promoting mental health such as “Mejor Imposible”, “El Espejo” and “Ábrete Camino”; by homeless people involved in the Asociación Realidades, “Onda Realidades”; and by asylum seekers and refugees participating in the Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid (CEAR), “Onda Refugio” programme.

> **ÁBRETE CAMINO.** Radio show produced by OMC Radio in collaboration with the Center for Psychosocial Rehabilitation (“CRPS”) Los Cármenes (registered in the Public Network of Social Care for People with Severe and Enduring Mental Illness. Developed since 2004, this project aims at making community radio programme based on the core values of the recovery. The programme allows participants (which are people suffering several mental illness) to be increasingly more autonomous in both the programme and in their lives. The programme serves for participants to express their opinion, to hear their concerns and wishes; and to send the message “that you can get ahead”, “you can do useful things”, to integrate and "make your way" beyond illnesses and everyday problems. Mental health professionals are also periodically interviewed. On other occasions, they interview people from other domains, especially from the field of culture, hobbies like cooking, sports and other local organizations and associations (e.g., theatre groups, professional photographers, etc.). Web: http://abretecamino.blogspot.com/ Podcast: https://www.ivoox.com/podcast-abrete-camino_sq_f1462711_1.html

ONDA COLOR RADIO (https://ondacolor.org/) is the community radio station of the Palma-Palmilla district (Málaga). It was created in 2009 as a non-profit citizen-based initiative liked to the neighborhood’s community development plan. Onda Color has gained substantial experience and capacity for media literacy and as an

emancipating tool. This community radio has become a collective agent that promotes social and cultural development with the socio-political participation of the community. Onda Color broadcasts several programmes promoting public health such as: “El árbol de la vida”, “Salud en Palma Palmilla, and “Salud mental”. Further, Onda Color has recently launched the “Barrio Sano (*healthy neighbourhood*) training project” allowing residents to learn about all the health resources available in the district of Palma Palmilla. In a playful and entertaining way, they provide useful information and solve residents’ doubts regarding health issues.

> **EL ÁRBOL DE LA VIDA.** Radio show produced and conducted by the family doctor Juan Quero, in collaboration with other health professionals, which guarantees that the contents are consistent and have the available scientific evidence. The content of the programme is quite diverse, aiming at increasing citizens’ literacy about health, well-being and healthy lifestyles. The show sometimes goes beyond the purely medical sphere to explore other aspects of health, understood as a complete state of physical, mental and social wellbeing. Produced in Onda Color, the programme is also distributed by Onda Local de Andalucía, the association of municipal radios in Andalucia. Podcast: https://www.ivoox.com/podcast-arbol-de-la-vida_sq_f1264248_1.html Web: https://www.emartv.es/el-arbol-de-la-vida/

RADIO ALMENARA (https://www.radioalmenara.net/) is the community radio station operating since 1991 in the Ventilla district (Madrid). In addition to serving as a means of communication for the citinzenship, Radio Almenara places great efforts in strengthening and making visible the social and associative fabric, providing coverage to the activities and actions carried out by the neighbourhood entities, as well as other community radio stations. Radio Almenara also develops radio training projects and in its own station, as well as in collaboration with the regional CM network. Almenara radio produces has produced a diversity of health-related radio shows that focus on mental health -such as “La Luciérnaga” programme and “Radio Trajineros” programme-, and functional diversity and disability (“Échale Papas” programme).

> **TRAJINEROS**. Radio show produced since 2011 by Radio Almenara in collaboration with the Center for Psychosocial Rehabilitation of Fuencarral and the care centre of Fuencarral. "Radio Trajineros" becomes a springboard space for the visibility of people with mental health problems, fighting against stigma and discrimination. It is considered a transformative tool since it is carried out in a community environment and participants, with the focus on the integration of users of the Center for Psychosocial Rehabilitation of Fuencarral in the community. The radio provides a space in which participants are empowered to express themselves and relate to other groups. Consequently, the engagement in this programme has a positive impact at the individual level, both in identity and in improving self-esteem, since each participant is part of a

community project, the radio station in which they can learn from others and take part of the organization. Although this radio show is coordinated by a therapist, the goal is that the intervention of these professionals become less relevant, since the group is gaining in autonomy and self-management capacity.

ÉCHALE PAPAS. Radio broadcast produced since 2016 on Radio Almenara and carried out by the Pintor Rosales Occupational Center in Madrid. This radio show engages the young people involved in the occupational center in the process of producing and broadcasting a radio programme, strengthening their communication skills and taking responsibility in the production of the programme. The radio allows the participation of people with intellectual disabilities in the creation of a radio show that entails approaching the studio, assuming responsibility for one's own role in the programme and active participation during the live broadcast. Further, the production of the content of each programme facilitates contact with people and organization, which contributes to increase participants' knowledge and life experience. Web: http://echalepapas.blogspot.com/ Podcast: https://archive.org/search.php?query=echale-papas

CUAC FM (https://cuacfm.org) is a voluntary-based community radio founded in 1996, owned by a non-profit association -CUAC- composed of 120 individuals, social and cultural entities. Cuac FM is a locally-embedded radio that particularly addresses the informational needs and interests of A Coruña metropolitan area. CUAC FM engages in public interest information, reflecting political pluralism and social and cultural diversity, by providing alternative content and information regarding those minorities/social groups under-represented in media. Its mission is to give voice to the voiceless and facilitate citizens' direct access to media, providing media training to every person or social group (including cultural, linguistic, ethnic, sexual minorities and vulnerable population) who wants to express their ideas throughout the radio. CUAC FM has a large trajectory broadcasting radio shows related to heath from different perspectives as "*Cuidado Corazón*" programme and "*Radio Prometea*". Moreover, "L*a Ciencia es Femenino*" is a programme about science that frequently covers women health issues.

RADIO PROMETEA. Radio magazine dedicated to the theme of mental health, care and rights of people who have not been to mental health, or format is a magazine with music, poetry, culture, etc. not that we touch transversally on more topics. It wants to be the voice of diagnosed people and defend their rights, but it is also open to all people. The programme sustains a critical position regarding the "prevailing reductionist view in the current psychiatric system". While mental health is still considered a taboo in conventional media, Radio Prometea intends to offer "a humane and inclusive vision of the sick. One of the objectives of the programme is to counteract the social stigma regarding their group, providing information

aimed mainly at their peers, but also take advantage of the radio to denounce "the schematization of the collective that is carried out from public institutions. For this reason, radio activity is complemented by an active presence on the Internet (Blog, Facebook, Twitter) and by participating in the International Network of Voice Listeners, Intervoice and the Hearing Voices movement. Web: https://radioprometea.wordpress.com/ Podcast: https://cuacfm.org/radioco/programmes/radio-prometea/

CUIDADO CORAZÓN. Radio show promoted by the AEEC (Spanish Cardiology Nursing Association) and produced and presented by nurses from A Coruña's Public University Hospital. The content focus on health education – and specifically the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, but without forgetting other health issues. Entertainment and good sense of humour are the strategies to engage the audience in content related to their health and wellbeing, also involving patients as interviewees, showing their experience with different illness and their process of recovery. The programme also informs about different projects that are conducted in the field of health and that are unknown to the general public. Further, some professionals collaborate with this radio show providing recommendations for healthy lifestyles (e.g. a nutritionist show how to cook healthy and low-fat meals on both radio and YouTube channels). Podcast: https://cuacfm.org/radioco/programmes/cuidado-corazon/

LA CIENCIA ES FEMENINO. This is the radio show produced in CUAC FM by the "Science is Feminine" association, which is a non-profit organization that promotes science literacy with a specific focus on Galician women scientists. The goals of the programme are to encourage citizen science, empower and facilitate the active participation of women scientists in media, and value the role of women in public health by interviewing Galician women researchers, experts, and practitioners in several domains, including public health. The directors of the programme organized recently the first congress organized by this association within its action for the comprehensive health of women. Web: https://lacienciaesfemenino.com/ Podcast: https://cuacfm.org/radioco/programmes/la-ciencia-es-femenino/

2.3 Good practice from MIL and PH practice

How is good PH coverage organised and presented?

In the Spanish context, the programmes dedicated to public health issues have a great diversity of perspectives, where the treatment of health issues in radio products is addressed in *magazines*, with a weekly or fortnightly schedule. This is due to the very characteristics of community media, whose management is volunteering-based with little institutional support. Therefore, these radio

programmes are not produced and directed by the media staff but by volunteers and associates of the entity who mostly not have media background.

One of the characteristics, therefore, of the health coverage in the Spanish CMs is that the promoters and people involved in the production of these programmes usually have a professional experience linked to the socio-health field, e.g. psychologists, nurses, family doctors, therapists, pharmacists, nutritionists, social workers etc., and which has three main objectives: (a) promote health-education and science literacy; (b) increase public awareness on the available public health services; and (c) promote the empowerment of people in their own health care, confronting a paternalistic view of health information that predominates in conventional media, in which the doctor or specialist appears as the person “who knows everything” and whose advice must be followed in order to "get healthy".

Which are the characteristics?

Participants’ profile. The health-related radio shows analysed are produced by professionals from the socio-health field such as primary care physicians (family doctors), nurses, social workers, therapists, pharmacists, nutritionists, physiotherapists, as well as experts, researchers, scientists and patients or users of the public health system. In the case of the Cuidado Corazón, it stands out for the role it gives to patients or users of social and health services, who are invited to tell their perspective, being the main protagonist of each episode. In the case of Ábrete Camino or Trajineros, both radio programmes have been boosted by the therapists and personnel of psychosocial rehabilitation centers located in different neighbourhoods in Madrid.

However, there are also a few programmes run by associations of relatives of people suffering from various diseases, or even that arise from the initiative of a group of people who have been diagnosed with an ailment or illness, for example, a mental illness. They do decide to broadcast a radio programme with the aim of normalizing their situation, eliminating stigmas still persistent in society, or simply favouring socialization and accompanying people in the same situation.

Content. Public health contents covered in Spanish community media adopt an integral and holistic perspective, treating health as physical, mental and social well-being, not only as the absence of disease, although these are also addressed in the different programmes. These contents are mostly presented as radio-magazines in which health is the main content. It is common to focus each episode on a specific theme, interviewing with one or more experts on said theme. These programmes usually have specific sections led by a number of expert collaborators who regularly participate in the programme, such as nutrition experts, psychologists, etc.

In the case of Cuidado Corazón, being promoted by nurses specialized in cardiology, the topics are oriented to the field of prevention and care of cardiovascular diseases. They aim to cover a wide lack of knowledge about these issues among the population and promote health education, empowering patients, and users. The programme The Tree of Life pays special attention to scientific dissemination, so disclose audiovisual content elaborated by other

professionals or associations available on the Internet (e.g., Youtube), which are considered valuable educational resources for the audience.

Among the usual contents in these programmes is also the information and disclosure about the social and health public services available to citizens because health does not depend only on health centers, but also on the availability of resources such as bio-health parks. From a holistic point of view, attention is paid to those factors that influence health or a healthy lifestyle, such as the quality of urban environments, economic capacity, or situations of poverty of certain social groups, or conditioning factors like gender etc. These programmes usually also place the microphones at the service of the associative fabric that exists around health, which is given a place in the programme, such as patient associations, professional societies, family groups, etc. who present their points of view and their demands to the public system.

The topics addressed in the programmes dedicated to mental health produced by diagnosed people are much more diverse, because they respond to the interests and needs of the participants themselves. Thus, although mental health problems are common content, these issues are treated positively and showing the perspective of patients and users, in order to overcome barriers and stigma. However, in the case of some programmes conducted by the diagnosed people themselves, the topics they address are remarkably diverse, since their interest is to normalize their situation and show that their group is capable of making a radio programme normally. For example, these magazines usually touch on topics such as leisure and hobbies, addressing the cultural and sports offer of the city or the neighbourhood, topics such as cooking, travel or sports competitions are also common, as explained by one of the members of Ábrete Camino.

Audience. Spanish community radio stations do not have studies that measure the number of listeners to their programmes that would help to know audience's profile. These radio activists have the intuition that their audience is formed by people who listen to the local radio and that are interested in their wellbeing. However, there is a certain perception among the interviewees that it is not possible to reach large audiences because programmes are spread through word of mouth among people from the neighbourhood, the city, or even from the workplaces of the participants, because many of their colleagues do listen to the programme. These programmes also produce podcasts, which amplifies the potential audience, as they are distributed among their followers and collaborating entities through social networks and webpages. Nevertheless, the perception that the audience of the programme is adult is shared, and that the pending challenge is to be able to reach young people.

In the case of El Árbol de la Vida, the programme is broadcast on Onda Color, but also on all the local Andalusian stations associated with EMA. The programme has also been involved in the organization of conferences in the health district in which they have been given a radio format or they produced a radio drama to be showed in these conferences.

The program,e Ábrete Camino has a close relationship with the social fabric in Carabanchel district, in which the psychosocial rehabilitation center is inserted. The members of the programme are known in the cultural centers, covering the main activities developed in the neighbourhood or even training a radio workshop in a local school.

In the case of La Ciencia es Femenino, the audience is mainly made up of people highly interested in science. Therefore, these programmes are listened by the colleagues of the researchers interviewed, their friends and relatives. However, when the topics addressed are innovative or interesting from a journalistic point of view, according to the director of the programme, these podcasts reach journalists from general media, who contact these researchers to interviewing them (after listening to CUAC FM).

What are the obstacles to providing good PH coverage?

The main obstacle highlighted by all the people interviewed refers to the **difficulty of making a high-quality production in a voluntary-based radio station**, whose members run these programmes altruistically and voluntarily. This means that the production work falls into the hands of a few people who dedicate numerous hours to the production of the interviews and the different sections, writing the scripts for the programmes, updating their websites and social networks. It is a hobby, to which they cannot enough time to dedicate to. As the director of La Ciencia es Femenino points, the production of a good interview to a relevant scientist implies to acquire a profound knowledge about her CV. Documentation takes a long time, but if it is done well, these people feel that they are important, they feel valued, because a lot of time has been invested in getting to know them.

The **pandemic of Covid-19** has also meant that programmes like Cuidado Corazón was suspended because all its members were in hospital services. In the case of OMC Radio, the pandemic affected members of Ábrete Camino. Most of the station's programmes were able to use zoom to produce their shows from home. Ábrete Camino was 3 months without broadcasting (during all the lockout), because doing the programme from home was not easy for them. Some had a mobile phone but no computer. Some had to learn how zoom worked and how they could connect to participate in the programme from home.

A third obstacle to the production of health programmes is related to the r**eluctance of the health institutions to appear in the media**. Interviewees find many difficulties to access medical professionals to be interviewed, because it requires the authorization of the health service, this supposes a significant temporary delay to be able to interview them in the programme. OMC radio has had a health programme directed for 13 years by doctor Darío Fernández. This programme, so-called Onda Salud, was first funded by the public health administration but later such support ended. It seems that within the health institutions of regions such as Madrid or Andalusia, clinical staff can only be interviewed in the media if they have the authorization of the directors of the work center. The participants in this study assure that there is a lot of fear on the

part of the institutions to allow any health worker to express their opinion in a communication medium that they cannot control.

This does not seem to occur in the case of researchers and scientists from the university or from research institutes and centers, who appear in media without prior control. However, as the director of La Ciencia es Femenino points out, interviewing women scientists is always a complicated task. She identifies in many of the experts the so-called **"imposter syndrome"** in terms that they are reluctant to intervene in the media because they do not want to have too much prominence or give the image that they feel they are important people, make them stand out from their peers.

How could the challenges be met, and the good examples replicated?

For community media could perform a good coverage of public health in their stations they should be aware that **health is an extremely sensitive topic that needs to be carefully addressed**. It is widely shared among the participants in this study that health issues are deficiently covered in general media. Information is often not accurate, preciseness, trivializing medical advances or abusing of scientific language. Consequently, this generates incomprehension or confusion among the population, which lacks of scientific literacy. Thus, in order to provide a good service at communicating health topics to the audience, community media should **professionalize the production** of these radio shows in terms of being able to dedicate enough time to documentation and production of interviews and the different sections of the programme. A **multidisciplinar and diverse team** would be also positive, in order to provide in-depth knowledge and different approaches to cover a single topic. In specific, gender issues are still present in scientific communication and could be overcome by introducing more women in these programmes. Thus, **obtaining support and funding** for the professionalization of the production allows these radio activists to perform a better programme and provide a better public service to the audience in terms of increasing community's scientific and health literacy.

The **involvement of the community** is also recommendable. For example, **inviting patients to the programme** to tell their story, to express their feelings and experience dealing with a disease is incredibly positive as other people suffering similar illness can feel identified. Then, a respectful and egalitarian approach should be adopted, avoiding the infantilization of the patient or the paternalism that traditionally exists in medicine and that is reproduced in the media, but trying to empower the audience to be more active in the care of their health. **Local approaches** are very welcome by the audience, who are willing to know what the health facilities and resources are available in their community.

Establishing **alliances with local associations** is a good starting point for a new radio programme on health. Professional groups, patients' associations, mental health centers etc., are usually interested in being more visible in media. They have formal structures and members which can be approached to be part of the programme, as experts or even as participants. Try to enrol also young people, which would provide an intergenerational vision of health.

Radio training is needed. At least in Spain, most of the activists in community media are people with no media background, and their communication and technical skills could be not sufficient for broadcasting. Thus, the radio stations should put their efforts in training and learning processes and provide support, also because of the digital divide. For example, elder people or people with mental health issues can found challenging to manage the technical equipment or the use of specific software to produce the programme.

3. Recommendations

Community media (CM) can become key actors for health promotion and empowering people to increase their control over and improve their health. In Spain, there are several positive examples of best practices in CM, becoming a remarkable source of information and education, strengthening knowledge, attitudes and/or behaviours in favour of health. But for the health-oriented radio shows do convince, empower and educate citizenry, a proper production is required. It should be accurate, rigorous, inter and multidisciplinary, intended to address a variety of health issues as well as the promotion of healthy lifestyles, from a holistic and integral perspective.

Community radio and television are the mass communication medium with the greatest coverage, since it reaches practically all homes and, thanks to smartphones, it is also widely heard in cars, offices, hospitals, etc. CM can increase citizens´ health literacy through radio spots, newscasts, interviews, reports, dialogue programmes, etc. Despite in radio, the message is usually short duration, the production of podcasts allows these contents to be available and reproduced by the audience any time, even in Hospitals, as we learned from one 1of the Galician broadcasts.

Although radio has the disadvantage that lacks the visual impact, which gives it less incidence among the receiving public, this issue can be overcome if the CM publishes a blog or Website to illustrate the content of the show and make it more accessible for a wide audience. Blogs and social networks are spaces for participation and communication with citizens which are excellent ways to complement the broadcasts. They also allow that health information remains for a long time and accessible through various information channels.

Public health media coverage should be based on the understanding of the community needs and the perceptions of their (local) audiences. It must also include the active participation of community in the media, and specifically the socio-health sector, in the critical instances of the production of the programme. Stablishing alliances with local or even national associations is one starting point to gain a plurality of voices and perspectives to integrate in the show and, also, to increase the potential audience reached. People with mental illness – and other type of diseases- and their families have an important role to play, especially through the associative movement. Properly trained, they can be sources of information and communicate proactively whether there is an opportunity to do so. It is key to report positive stories of social recovery, overcoming and normalization in the community life.

The main obstacle highlighted by all the participants refers to the difficulty of making a high-quality production in a voluntary-based radio station, whose members run these programmes altruistically and voluntarily. As production takes a long time and different voices need to be involved, the Spanish community media dedicated to health information and education should call for better recognition from public authorities as key actors in media literacy and scientific education.

Such acknowledgement should also allow for a more adequate funding model for community media. Financial support from public administrations will strengthen CM´s capacity to enrol more media professionals in their teams and dedicate their human resources to the production of public health programmes. It is expected that the explicit recognition in Law of community media as relevant actors for media literacy will increase their funds by being involved in media literacy and training projects. Otherwise, public health institutions could be also a new source of funding, as previous experiences in OMC showed. Thus, gaining a better interlocution is also suggested between public health sector and community media to increase its support to health education programmes in community radio and television. Creating bonds of trust between public health professionals and community media, offering themselves as reliable sources of information, and establishing alliances based on ethical journalism with the media can be effective and attractive measures for the media.

Aspects to be included in a 2-day workshop with CM broadcasters and community representatives – as a basis for effective CM programming:

1. Learning communication skills to empower and educate citizenry to be active in favour of health, addressing the promotion of healthy lifestyles, from a holistic and integral perspective and contribute to behavioural change and health literacy.

2. Training should promote anti-stigma awareness actions to try to reduce unfair views of people with (mental) illness. Awareness of pernicious social effect that media has on reproducing stereotypes, blaming patients or treating mental illness. It is necessary to have more detailed information on the nuances of the treatment that is done in the media (what information is offered about mental illness, how often, what pathologies it affects, in what type of media, in what supports, what stereotypes are reinforced, etc.).

3. Documentation and research on health communication. Journalists and media professionals have not background in each of the topics they report on. They should learn on how to research about relevant topics, get familiar with different sources of reliable information and know more and new voices from science, in order to prioritize domains and avoid gender issues, discrimination of certain groups of population.

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