

European
Excellence
Exchange in
Journalism
(E³J)

Public Health Literacy and Community Media in Europe

Final Conference Report

Vienna, January 19, 2024



Summary

The following impressionistic summary of the conference is in the spirit of the very full and intense day, into which every participant had put a lot of planning, expectation, travel time and anxiousness. A more detailed report is given below:

Together we, 40 people from 10 European countries, celebrated a wonderful, fantastic, and fun conference day, full of sharing and learning, thinking and testing ideas, of laughing and hugging and making new friends - while meeting old ones. It could not have been better!!! After 1½ years of intense work to implement the E3J public health literacy for community empowerment in community media, this day marked the conclusion of our many activities.

All the eight community radio stations forming the core of the project were with us from Spain, Austria, Ireland and Denmark, along with the national researchers, the workshop facilitators, the project managers and with the EU Creative Europe Coordinator of our work, Guido di Fiore, flying in from Bruxelles - along with the E3J consortium partners from FPU, COPEAM and RSF. What a wonderful event!!!

Keynoted by World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO's MIL Coordinator and with Yvonne Prinzellner as a powerful, enthusiastic, and insightful moderator of the event and Daniela Waser's fantastic visual report of the day's three distinct components, the day was complete. As organisers, we are happy and grateful, and share our warmest recognition of everyone contributing. Thank you to all ♥!



The participants of the E3J Conference in Vienna

All photos: COMMIT.

Graphic recording: Daniela Waser, CC-BY-SA

Background

COMMIT and Community Media Forum (CMFE) have collaborated on the implementation of the Public Health component of the EU co-funded E3J project, which started in April 2022 and ends March 2024.

With an aim to provide production grants to eight community media in four European countries, the CMFE/COMMIT (C&C) project management started the process by identifying Austria, Denmark, Ireland and Spain as the four countries engaged, and had national studies undertaken to map the public health literacy, MIL and community media realities in these countries.

In the studies, the importance for community media to be both systematic and strategic in building on their proximity to the citizens was underscored. This already was found to happen in several cases where community radio stations opened their microphones to groups usually excluded or stereotyped by the media.

Based on the insights derived, criteria for selection of grantees were developed, a call for proposal widely disseminated, and grantees selected. From April 20 to October 15, the eight grantee stations worked to implement their winning public health series proposal. National Workshops were carried out in each of the four countries, to share and to learn ways to address the oftentimes sensitive issues relating to public health, most effectively.

To conclude and celebrate it all, the final conference was set for January 19, to bring together all the actors in the intense 1½ year process, and to share the rich learning of the processes conducted in our implementation of the public health literacy strand of the E3J project.



The Conference

The conference brought together community media practitioners and experts from no less than 10 European countries and consisted of three main parts, which are briefly presented hereunder. Yvonne Prinzellner, a communication scientist and public health expert from the FH St. Pölten in Austria, led through the day as moderator:

- Introductions and keynotes by local representatives from the supporting City of Vienna and the host Press Club Concordia, as well as the high-level experts from the two UN organisations relevant to this project component: the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNESCO;
- Station presentations by each of the eight stations from the four European countries making up the core of the project, concluded in this conference;
- Way forward: the online learning platform to disseminate the learning of the project, and the outcome of the group work by the participants evaluating and charting the way forward.

Part 1 and 2 of the conference were recorded and could be followed online by remote participants via Zoom. 19 remote participants in total were present for at least part of the time, some of them represented community radio stations making the stream available to view for several of their radio practitioners who could not come to Vienna themselves. The whole day of the conference was accompanied by a live graphic recording by illustrator Daniela Waser. The recorded presentations and the graphic recording will be made available online on the COMMIT website: <https://www.commit.at/european-excellence-exchange-in-journalism-e3j>.



*Helmut Peissl & Birgitte Jallov
open the conference*



*Katharina Weninger, City of Vienna
gives her welcoming address*

Introductions and keynotes

Welcoming words by the Conference organisers Helmut Peissl, COMMIT and Birgitte Jallov, CMFE, Community Radio Forum Europe, opened the event. This was followed by welcome addresses and keynotes.

- **Katharina Weninger, Member of the City Council, Vienna**, highlighted that the city of Vienna is committed to the work of community media and pleased to welcome representatives from the community media movement in a number of European countries, and to host the event.
- **Daniela Kraus, General Secretary of Press Club Concordia**, where the event took place, explained the historical roots of the Press Club and their commitment to press freedom. As a result of the revolution of 1848, the Press Club was established in 1859 as a meeting point for press conferences and meetings for debate and bringing the agenda of press freedom forward. She stressed that she found their space a very suitable place for exactly this European community media event.
- **Alton Grizzle, Head of the Media and information Literacy department in UNESCO Paris**, addressed the forum online with his presentation: “Why is Media and Information Literacy central to Public Health?”. He stressed the key component of Critical Thinking and today’s necessity for us all to build the capacities needed to address and work with the media with the insights and understanding required.
- **Jun Ryan Orbina, technical officer, vaccine demand and behavioural science at WHO**, addressed the forum online with a presentation focusing on “The Role of Community Media in Public Health”. Jun stressed that engagement of communities is so important because it builds on the trust necessary when addressing public health issues. He furthermore underscored the power and importance of community media in rural areas, where information also on public health needs to be shared with the involvement of the communities themselves.

Station presentations

Introducing the community media production phase by the E3J project’s eight station presentations, Birgitte Jallov presented the grant application and award process, with learning and exchange workshops in each of the four countries – and the powerful final reporting emerging from all of them.

The station presentations of each country were preceded by a short presentation from the 4 national researchers about the most important conclusions from their national research conducted as part of the E3J project. The presenters were Birgitte Jallov for Denmark, Isabel Lema for Spain and Simon Olipitz, who represented both the research conducted by Kathy Cush for Ireland (who could not be present at the conference herself for health reasons) and his own research for Austria.



Radio Rønde shared that they re-focused their programme organisation after having taken part in the inspiring national workshop, underlining the opportunities by community media to be agents of change in the area of public health in the local community by

engaging the citizens themselves. Also creating opportunities for conversation between experts and the community, and where the experts listen and learn – stressing that those with public health challenges are not just those with the problems but also the holders of the solutions.

Radio Bazar, based in a multi-ethnic community, chose to take up the experienced challenges among immigrants and refugees of 'cross cultural health understanding and medicine', sharing good practices of meeting people with a different cultural background, giving a social public health introduction to the Danish society.





From Spain we had three stations participating coming from communities around Madrid, Malaga and Sevilla.

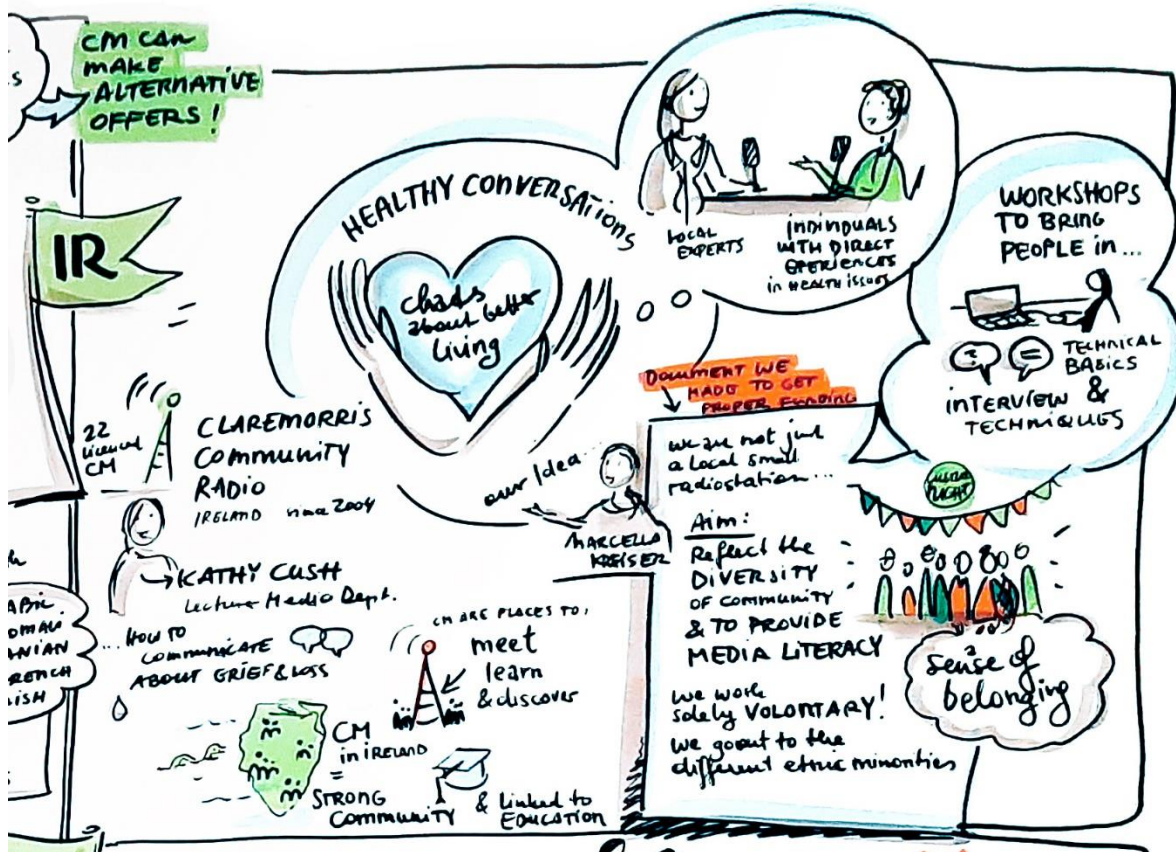
Radio Jabato, based in the Coslada community in the outskirts of Madrid, invited the community into the studios saying “Everyone’s Health, Everyone’s Commitment”, focusing every programme on the public health challenges of different groups in the community.



Onda Color Comunitaria, Malaga wanted to show that it is important to be attentive and to act when something ‘hurts’ and therefore chose an action-oriented “how to...” approach on issues from mental over sexual health, loneliness, medication and drug abuse, taking the core issues from their immediate community in Palma Palmilla.

Radiopolis, Sevilla focused on mental health and youth, to engage with and disarm taboos. With a young psychologist as the central character through the programmes, the principal youth audience were called to engage, get a voice, be informed and empowered.



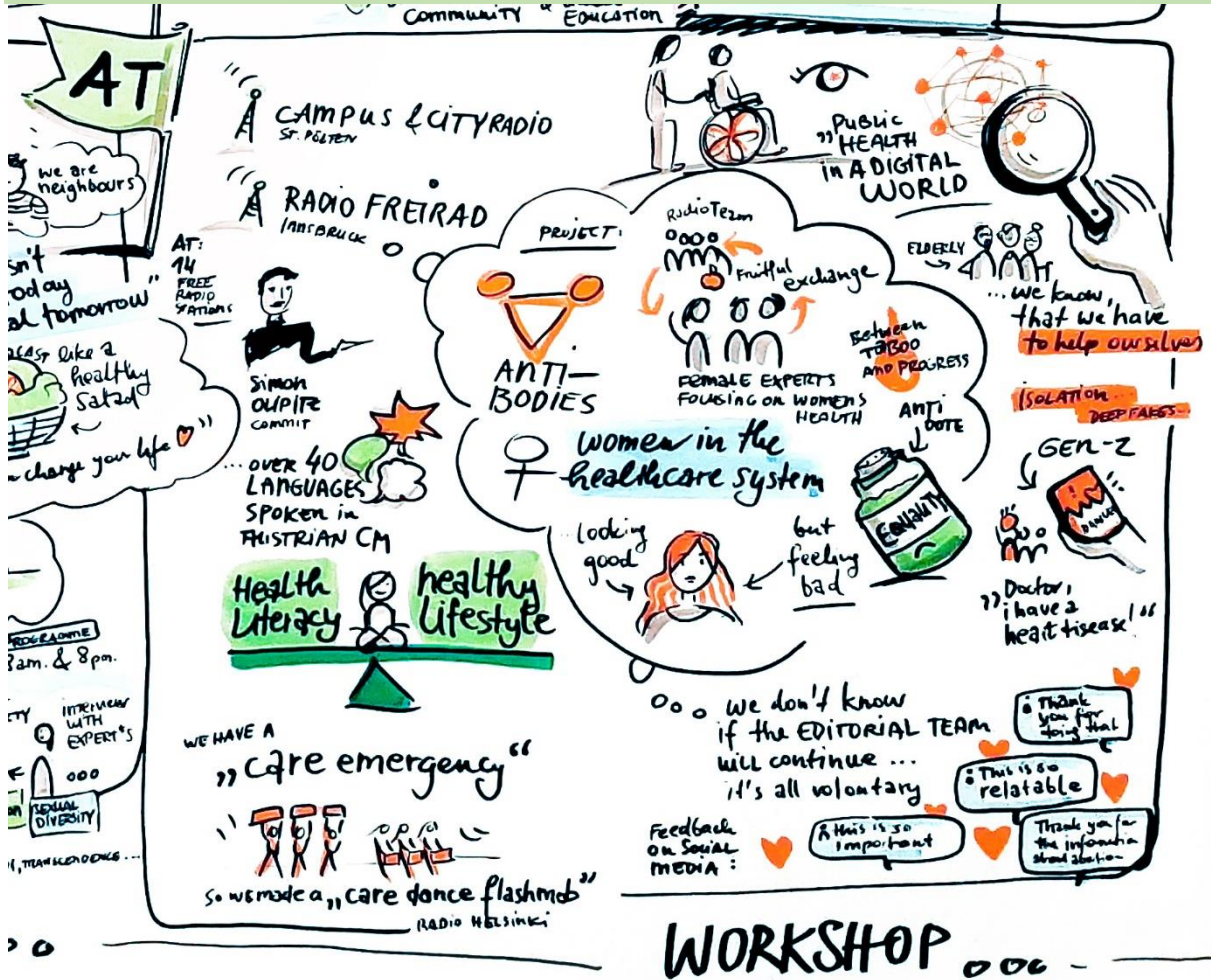


Claremorris Community Radio has only a 10 km transmission radius, and a potential reach of up to 10,000 listeners. Their main focus is solidarity-focused, highlighting the ‘social benefit’ they generate – a part of the Irish community media remit.

With “Healthy Conversations – chats about better living” that station had recruited a whole new team for the public health editorial group, starting out with basic radio production skills training. The station had experienced the new radio volunteers’ excitement, realising the power of engaging the community in the issues about health and good living, of immediate interest to their community.

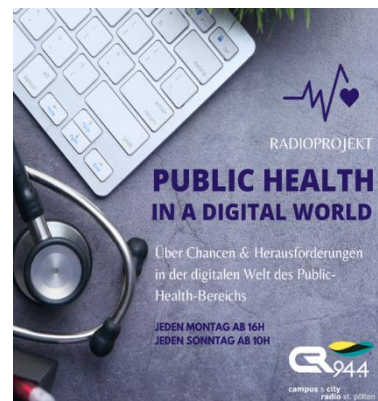


Austria



Radio FREIRAD focused on women's health and how to get out of male-centred debates, stressing the neglect of the health system to focus on women's real health issues. Their production process was realised by engaging half experienced team members and half newcomers supported by a buddy-system.

Campus and City Radio St. Pölten took up the challenges many community members meet with the increasing digitization of the health system. The new challenges presented by digitization represented both the advantages for instance to people living with disabilities and the disadvantages experienced by some marginalized audiences including elderly people.



Way forward

Online learning resource

Birgitte Jallov, the CMFE E3J project manager, introduced the online learning resource, developed by her on the basis of the whole CMFE/COMMIT E3J process.

MODULES 1 - 5

✧ Module 1 - Community Media, a platform for Public Health

- What is 'Community media'?
- What is 'Public Health'?
- Why are they good platforms for public health?

✧ Module 2 - Knowing your community and your target group(s) – setting goals

- How is your community made up? Who are your audiences?
- Identifying the public health needs of your audiences.
- With this knowledge in mind: what would you like to ideally achieve?

✧ Module 3 - Style and approach of programmes

- With the target group in mind, what kind of programme do you plan?
- Which programme formats will you want to use?
- What about languages: only one, or more? How to handle this?

✧ Module 4 - Programme formats and MIL focus

- How can you best meet the public health challenges in your community?
- What is media and information literacy in a community station?
- How do you check your facts – and counter mis- and disinformation?

✧ Module 5 - Synopsis to clarify all aspects of your programme series

- Working with a synopsis - Being ready to go on air: what is missing?
- Development of synopsis and programme plans for each programme.
- Which resources in your community would you like to engage?



Birgitte Jallov presents the E3J work

The objective of this resource is to broaden the reach of the E3J Public Health/MIL Component to many more community media or other smaller media, interested in support to developing a public health programme series.

By following the five modules, stations will – step-by-step – be able to develop their programme identity and objective as well as a practical plan for going on air.

This resource can be used both by an editorial group by itself, it can be used by a facilitator, supporting the creation of an editorial group – or it can be used as self-study, on how to plan an editorial group – on public health or in principle any other thematic issue.

Access it here: <https://www.jti-campus.org/content/detail/view/109>

Group reports

To summarize all the ideas and learnings of the day, the participants of the conference were divided into 4 groups and asked to discuss four questions:

- What is my most powerful take-away from the E3J process / from today?
- What surprised me the most?
- To which extent do I wish to continue with public health programming on my station? If not, why?
- To what extent would you like to be involved in an informal European network covering public health issues?

The groups were composed beforehand, to ensure a broad representation by as many stations, nations and realities possible. The answers emerging in the report-back were often similar, but not always. They were:



The 4 Working Groups discuss their learnings and future perspectives

What is my most powerful take-away from the E3J process / from today?

- The diversity of formats and community media realities in Europe.
- The motivation giving a boost of inspiration and creativity: we are not alone.
- The day had given a powerful underscoring of the importance of trust in public health communication – and the powerful place for community media in doing this here.
- The importance of MIL in public health programming due to the important role that (community) media play in the public debate. Community media takes it a step further as it is the community producing the programmes.

What surprised me the most?

- The similarities despite the diversity of the different realities;
- How much Public Service media could learn from community media regarding formats and creativity (COPEAM);
- The level of commitment found in the communities because everyone is concerned about public health issue;
- That mental health was so prominently featured in the programme choices by the stations – along with other taboo and stigmatized issues;



To which extent do I wish to continue with public health programming on my station? If not, why?

- Almost all stations intended to continue with the public health programme series;
- Many expressed the need to raise new funds to be able to continue. Some stations were highlighting that the important public fund for PSAs, and that the potential by communication through community media would be a powerful way not used;
- All stressed the high level of responsibility when dealing with (public) health issues, due to the potential effect wrong information could have.

To what extent would you like to be involved in an informal European network covering public health issues?

- It would need to be inspiring and motivating, for participants to find value and choose to prioritize the events. This could be ensured by bringing in people with experience, sharing – as a basis for exchange.
- Everyone wanted to keep in touch, as it would be very inspiring onwards. But the groups were realistically hesitant as to the possibilities:
 - Who will coordinate?
 - How could it be funded?
 - How would people find time to do it?



Moderator Yvonne Prinzeller



The working groups report back their results

Ending

After the group work, the conference ended with a short presentation by Chloé Fiodiere from RSF about the Journalism Trust Initiative part of E3J and with a summary of the day given by Daniela Waser based on her graphic recording.



Final words

COMMIT would like to thank everyone involved in the conference for their great commitment and the insights they all provided into their work. Getting to know the different focal points, challenges, local conditions and approaches in media production was an important prerequisite for a more in-depth exchange and provided inspiration and motivation for further work on the topic of public health in community media. The conference was an important prerequisite for the establishment of a thematic network that will continue to exist after the end of the project and is intended to support the exchange and cooperation of all participants. The conference impressively demonstrated the importance of personal encounters and mutual appreciation - especially for media designers in community radios, who perform their work largely unpaid and out of social commitment in the sense of social benefit.



Daniela Waser summarises the conference with her graphic recording

