

**BE-PIN**  
The Belgian Pandemic  
Intelligence Network



Institute for  
Interdisciplinary  
Innovation in  
healthcare

# Identification of training needs for communication in pandemic management

*Preliminary findings*

# Our work

- I3h Institute: 10 years of experience in developing interdisciplinary educational program in healthcare innovation - Led by Prof. Dewatripont, Stevens and Goldman
- Part of the BE-PIN project: Identify training needs and co-create appropriate modules for capacity building
- Preliminary findings based on a first literature review and mapping of existing trainings:
  - Training mapping in Belgium & online
  - Key stakeholders
  - First identified training needs
- Cross our findings with interviews and survey results
  - Validate training needs and co-create modules
  - Suggest implementation approach: Blended learning (in-person & online), “A-la-carte” modules; Train-the-trainer model, etc.

# 1. Main objectives of training

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One key aspect of pandemics is **urgency** and the fact that new/inexperienced people ‘unexpectedly’ got involved in its management => **uncertainty**

**Objectives:** Develop a clear, engaging and **honest** communication; stick to **expertise**; strengthen community **engagement**, **collaboration** and **cooperation**; ability to explain **basic knowledge** on infectious diseases; draft a “What we know / don’t know / what we are doing” framework

**Reinforce communication-related soft skills:** Public speaking & presence, storytelling, audience engagement, collaboration & co-creation, empathy, confidence & ownership of research



# 2. Identified key stakeholders

**Scientists & researchers:**  
Advise decision-makers

## Training needs (preliminary findings):

- **Opportunities & limitations of interdisciplinary expertise:** Understand the limits of one's expertise in communicating knowledge. Collaborate across disciplines and know when to consult other experts (Epidemiology ≠ virology ≠ economics)
- **Actionable communication to policy-makers:** Present findings in clear, decision-ready formats. Explain risks (and their implications on the health system, economy and public behavior), and uncertainties
- **Translating scientific concepts responsibly:** Simplify without distortion. Adapt messages to non-specialist audiences while maintaining accuracy
- Use of **Communication tools and channels**

# 2. Identified key stakeholders

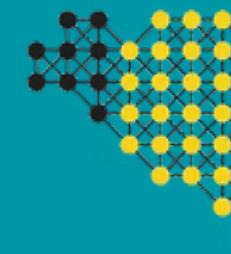
**Policy-makers:**  
**Governance, resources allocation and ensure effective collaboration**

## Training needs (preliminary findings):

- **Communicate evidence-based strategies:** Translate scientific literacy and epidemiological indicators (e.g.: hospitalization trends). Turn research into actionable policies (e.g.: thresholds for triggering school closures, vaccination prioritization, isolation protocols)
- **Public & media communication:** Communicate risk under uncertainty to diverse audiences. Storytelling. Handle press interactions responsibly to avoid panic/controversy (e.g.: masks, vaccines, school closures) and misinformation
- **Manage uncertainty and political pressure:** Lead under incomplete evidence and adapt policies to new scientific findings. Negotiate with conflicting stakeholder interests (health, economy, education)
- **Ethical communication:** Addressing different, particularly vulnerable, populations, ability to justify restrictive measures

# Focus: Young people as key partners in pandemic preparedness

- Young people are already mobilized around environmental issues linked to pandemic risks. Educating them will reinforce other measures
- COVID-19 has caused unprecedented disruption to the children's daily lives (school closures, online learning, social distancing measures, limited access to outdoor activities)
- The pandemic showed youth the severe social, educational, and mental-health impacts of pandemics. But every virus will have its specificity (and different mode of transmission (e.g.: HIV)), so training will need to be 'virus-specific'
- Educating children and adolescents on infectious diseases, vaccines, and public health measures - starting in primary school - is essential: young people can become active partners (by promoting preventive behaviors like hygiene and vaccination, sharing reliable information on social media and fostering solidarity within their communities)



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# Thank you for your attention

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