



BE-PIN
The Belgian Pandemic
Intelligence Network



Institute for
Interdisciplinary
Innovation in
healthcare

Identification of training needs for communication in pandemic management

Preliminary findings

I3h Institute (ULB) - November 28, 2025

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

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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