

Dear reader,

With this second newsletter, we would like to walk you through some of the principles that underlie our methodology. In particular, we will tell you about systems thinking and how it relates to JoinUs4Health. We will also give you a peek into what we have been up to and let you know how you can get engaged in our project.

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Systems thinking

The problems we face as societies have become increasingly complex. Most health outcomes do not have only one direct cause but rather are parts of an interconnected web of causes and consequences that lead to a particular event. Therefore, it is important to understand the world through such connectedness as many systems usually interact with each other.

What is a system?

A system is a set of interconnected elements and the way that these elements behave collectively, which is determined by the interactions between them. We come across complex systems every day in our lives. For example, our bodies are complex systems, where our cells, tissues and organs engage in a complex web of interactions to determine what our bodies can do and how they function. It is important to realize that a system is not the sum of its elements, but also includes the interactions between them and the resulting behavior of its elements.

Why is thinking in systems important?

When we analyze separate pieces of a complex puzzle, we miss out on important information that could help us tackle the problem that we want to address. If issues are part of a larger complex system, focusing on one specific element can create unintended consequences in other parts of the system.



One Health.

Our first featured topic: One Health and systems thinking

One Health is a good example of how systems thinking can be applied in practice as it recognizes that human health is part of a complex system, where it influences and is influenced by the health of non-human animals and the environment. Because of this, it implies that humans cannot be healthy unless we also take care of our environments and animals, and that some actions that we take to improve our health might have unintended consequences for the health of other living beings or environments and therefore, have an unforeseen impact on our health.

Our co-creation processes

We hope that the collaboration on our platform will take many formats and serve many purposes. However, we want to motivate participants towards thinking about the issues, questions and suggestions they contribute via the platform in a more systems-directed way. For that purpose, we will encourage working teams and the platform community to consider how the issue that they want to work on is positioned within the complex systems that make up human health.

Additionally, we will provide a gamified training module for future members of our systems thinking team, where they will work through examples of questions, which they may want to investigate using systems thinking. Team members will also have the opportunity to apply this training when developing their own project with their team members and facilitators.

Want to learn more about systems thinking?

You can watch a video from the Open University that offers an explanation on systems thinking with concrete examples

[Watch video](#)

How to get involved?



There is still time to sign up to join our team for our pilot project. Are you keen on being part of a team of people with diverse backgrounds and working together in a health research project determined by you and your peers? Send us an email at contact@joinus4health.eu.

Recent activities and achievements.



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✓ Citizen Science Boards and Monitoring and Evaluation Groups

We want to put in practice the ideals in which we believe when it comes to engaging citizens in research. So in our project and within all three of our participating cohort studies, we take into account the advice of a citizen science board. The citizen science board is responsible for reviewing applications from teams that wish to access results from our cohorts and advise on activities conducted within our platform. Additionally, we are establishing monitoring and evaluation groups that will help us track our progress as a project and ensure that we are moving forward in the right direction. If you are interested in learning more about these advisory boards, please check our website: joinus4health.eu/join-us

✓ Educational Initiatives

We've been busy collecting initiatives that share our goals and that try to implement Responsible Research and Innovation in education. You can take a look at what we found in [this document](#)

With these findings in mind, we are proposing a new minor program at Erasmus Medical Centre, in Rotterdam, for medical students focusing on the dialogue between science and society. We expect the program to be launched in 2022/2023.

Stay up to date with our upcoming news.



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101006518.

Legal notice

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