

## Editorial

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# Settings for planetary health and well-being: Considerations for the theme of the 25th Global Conference of IUHPE, Abu Dhabi, 2025

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### A unique and momentous opportunity

The 25th World Conference of the International Union for Health Promotion and Education to be held in 2025 (IUHPE2025) is a momentous occasion. Not only do we celebrate a jubilee in our series of world conferences in our 74th year, but this global gathering of the health promotion community and its institutions will also, for the first time, take place in a part of the world that is bounded by the Mediterranean in the North to the Sahel in the South, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Sea: Abu Dhabi, Capital of the United Arab Emirates, will be hosting our Conference as part of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region.

### A place on the world stage

Considered the cradle of civilisation, urbanisation and the Abrahamic faiths, the diverse countries of the region hold great significance as a historic focal point of scientific discovery and knowledge. Not only is the region making great strides in health development and innovation, it also recognises its challenges and responsibilities in a post-industrial and post-carbon-extraction world. Significant world events are taking place in the Gulf countries and their neighbours, showing commitment to global alignment and action. These range from the climate change COP28 conference to global sports events and international exhibitions.

### Health pressures

Social, economic, political and health developments parallel these global challenges and responsibilities. Because of their rapid pace of development, demographic challenges include both ageing and adolescent population growth. At the same time, emergency situations ranging from the consequences of climate change to armed conflict and forced human mobility also mean that health developments are observed with keen interest by local, regional and global stakeholders. These include affected communities, non-governmental organisations and global state and industry actors. There is great urgency in identifying and implementing health and social innovations, in particular grounded in the health promotion paradigm that further builds on statements from the *Ottawa Charter* (1) to the *Geneva Charter for Well-Being* (2), the IUHPE2019 Rotorua Statement on *Waiora: Promoting Planetary Health and Sustainable Development for All* (3), the IUHPE2022 *Tiohtià:ke Statement* (4), IUHPE Position Statement on Planetary Health Promotion and Indigenous World Views and Knowledges (5) and the COP28 UAE Declaration on Climate and Health (6), and alludes to the IUHPE2023 Position Statement: *A practical vision for a health-literate world* (7) and the *WHO Shanghai Declaration on Promoting Health in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (8).

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## Health settings innovations

Innovation has been embraced by countries and communities in the region with vigour and enthusiasm. This includes a prominent focus on settings for health promotion. There is a booming healthy cities network across the region; a growing health promoting schools movement, a nascent and strong effort toward health promoting universities, and evidence-based innovations in healthy shopping malls where vulnerable populations may exercise and build health resilience in climate controlled environments. The discourse on the development and application of digital media and virtual environments for health continues to be on the agenda, in particular when it comes to the application of artificial intelligence for evidence-informed health policy and what some call ‘precision prevention’.

## Balancing health and social sustainability, and resilience

At the same time, communities and authorities in the region recognise the unique challenges to sustainable health development in social and physical environments that are hot and dry, and where population pressures require particular investments that are sometimes difficult to reconcile with principles of planetary health, and well-being economies. A double burden of disease and possible opportunity for health resilience, locally and globally, dictates the need to combine traditional public health interventions (vaccinations, lifestyle investments and primary health) with cutting edge work on social, political and commercial determinants of health (9). IUHPE2025 will provide an opportunity for stocktaking and inspiration, both for the region and the world.

## Conference theme and sub-themes

Building on its strong legacies from recent conferences (in Geneva, Pattaya, Curitiba, Rotorua and Montreal), IUHPE2025 will embrace firm agendas of equity, planetary and eco-health, indigenous voices, community-based health development and salutogenic well-being perspectives that combine and engage systems and people perspectives on positive health.

The proposed theme for the conference, therefore, is ‘*Settings for Planetary Health and Well-Being*’.

Explicitly, the following sub-themes (aligning with IUHPE policy and the actions undertaken by its global working groups, language networks, early career professional network and regional offices) are critical:

- demographic change and inclusion of all age groups, genders and beliefs;
- health equity and its determinants;
- health promotion financing;
- global diplomacy and emergency/pandemic preparedness in the current social and natural reality;
- health literate settings, schools, healthcare, communities and beyond;
- new settings for health (promotion) innovation;
- digital health transformation (AI, big data, digital equity, tools and stewardship);
- health and wellbeing in all policies;
- global (global/local) networks for health;
- one health and planetary health promotion (eco-health, human and animal health, healthy spirit);
- spirituality, faith and planetary well-being;
- precision health promotion.

We invite health promoters, communities, activists, scholars, students and policy operators to actively participate and contribute to this dialogue and exchange, and to help transform our world for the global vision for planetary health and well-being.

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