



Ten bundles of measures  
for a health-promoting  
future in Austria



# ROADMAP

“Future Health Promotion”



“We want to improve people’s health and their quality of life. People themselves know best how that works and what we need to do. That’s why we invited everybody to have a say and contribute their own ideas and suggestions using different participation formats. This roadmap combines the perspectives of members of the public, experts and decision makers. The results will be incorporated in important health-policy choices over the next few years. Come and join us on our way!”

Federal minister Johannes Rauch

# Strategy process “Future Health Promotion”

## Mission statement

### *Call for a partnership-based approach to implementation*

**Imagine a future with a good quality of life, many healthy years of life and equity for everybody living in Austria.** Health promotion can make a particularly important contribution to that right now.

If global and national challenges – the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the climate crisis – have made one thing clear it is that long-term values geared towards the common good, like an intact environment as the basis of life, quality of life and social cohesion, should prevail over short-term individual interests. This roadmap is committed to the idea of a well-being society in which everybody’s welfare and health as well as environmental and climate protection are at the heart of our joint efforts. It shows us one way to a health-promoting future for Austria. Now is the right moment to invest in health on a sustainable basis.

**This roadmap is the result of the strategy process “Future Health Promotion” involving a wealth of voices.** The various methods used in this participatory process made it possible to take a visionary, long-term look into the future as well as to negotiate short- and medium-term priorities. Foresight methodology offered a glimpse into a more distant future. Citizens’ assemblies and focus groups complemented by online discussion formats involving **experts, stakeholders, decision makers and the general public** – including vulnerable groups – made it possible to set priorities for the next few years. The participants in this process identified a whole series of particularly pressing issues like mental health, particularly in young people, reducing the burden on employees in the health, care and social sectors or the need for evidence-based, low-threshold and high-quality health information resources. But also the significance of social solidarity, which takes away individuals’ existential fears

and promotes inclusion, particularly for those whose life is precarious. Members of the public and experts alike stake high hopes on creating health-promoting environments in rural and urban communities with broad and low-threshold access to approaches which have already been implemented in individual regions in Austria, like caring communities, healthy neighbourhoods or community nursing.

The roadmap spells out that **broad participation, particularly involving members of the public as well**, is of fundamental importance when health-related decisions have to be made and when relevant infrastructure should be set up, expanded and consolidated. The common understanding of experts and members of the public promotes coordinated action by stakeholders.

There are numerous national and international strategies relating to various aspects of health promotion. This roadmap is not meant to replace these strategies. Rather, it reveals connections and provides orientation as to which measures should be fleshed out and implemented collectively, right now, across sectors, in Austria, in order to achieve more well-being and more healthy years of life for everybody living in Austria.

## Participatory strategy process “Future Health Promotion”

### What was done?

Together with the Competence Centre for Future Health Promotion (Kompetenzzentrum Zukunft Gesundheitsförderung), part of the Austrian Health Promotion Fund (Fonds Gesundes Österreich), a business unit at the Austrian National Public Health Institute (Gesundheit Österreich GmbH), the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz) organized a broad-based participatory process as part of the Agenda for Health Promotion. Members of the public, experts and decision makers were invited to contribute their perspectives and recommendations for a health-promoting future in Austria.

Based on the findings of all of the groups involved, an editorial team prepared this recommendation paper with ten bundles of measures for more quality of life and more healthy years of life for everybody living in Austria. Experts and decision makers from different fields were involved in the editorial process. Before the paper was adopted, it was possible to comment publicly on it online.\*



Photo: Sultan Zuleyha Afsan / Anaheed Strauhs

\* [www.beteiligung.agenda-gesundheitsfoerderung.at](http://www.beteiligung.agenda-gesundheitsfoerderung.at)

# How and when could people get involved?



## Survey to mark ten years of Austrian Health Targets

**July 2021:** a population survey and complementary focus groups on health in everyday life, health during the COVID-19 pandemic and personal health resources.



## Foresight process

**2021:** experts and stakeholders worked together on drafting visionary goals to refine and anchor health promotion sustainably in different sectors of society by 2050.



## Online consultation with experts

**May to June 2022:** on the online participation platform\* experts recommended starting points and concrete measures for various sectors of society, building on previous processes and existing strategies.



## Online citizens' dialogue

**July to September 2022:** interested citizens reported on their experience of needs so that health-promoting measures can be introduced where they are needed most.



## Four focus groups and one round table discussion

**August to September 2022:** sections of the population who were less able to participate in the other formats were actively involved in the discussions. These included those affected by poverty, young people, people with a migratory background and older adults as well as people with health issues and their family carers who are involved in self-help groups.



## Three citizens' assemblies

**September to October 2022:** randomly selected members of the public from all over Austria spent an intensive 1 ½ days in Salzburg, Graz or Vienna exchanging their views on future health promotion. Each citizens' assembly drafted five core messages with concrete proposals for action.



## Event: Forum for Future Health Promotion

**October 2022:** the results of all of the groups involved in the process were presented at a hybrid event in Vienna and discussed against the background of existing national and international strategies and developments in order to devise effective, needs-based bundles of measures.

\* [www.beteiligung.agenda-gesundheitsfoerderung.at](http://www.beteiligung.agenda-gesundheitsfoerderung.at)

# Participating in the strategy process “Future Health Promotion”

## Who was involved?

Around 500 people in all participated actively in the strategy process in 2021 and 2022, including approximately 300 experts and some 180 members of the public. In addition, more than 2,000 people took part in an online survey and in focus group discussions between summer and autumn 2021.

**150** experts (in person, in the foresight process)

**2,102** members of the public  
(survey on ten years of Austrian Health Targets)

**49** focus group participants (in person)  
5 young people, 11 older adults, 2 people at risk of poverty, 14 people with a migratory background (Arab-speaking and Turkish-speaking women and Turkish-speaking men), 17 members of self-help groups

**43** participants in citizens' assemblies (in person)

**86** members of the public (online on the participation platform)

**176** experts (online on the participation platform)

**88** members of the public as well as **153** experts and stakeholders (in person/online, Forum for Future Health Promotion)



## Representatives of the following strategies were involved in the process

### How were people invited to get involved?

In 2021, three events took place in the strategic future process (kick-off, scenarios forum and visions forum) at which experts and stakeholders from a wide range of fields, including politics, research, health promotion practice, civil society, self-help, business and education, contributed their perspectives and developed a vision for “Health Promotion 2050” together.

In 2022, as part of the participatory strategy process, some 6,000 people from all over Austria were randomly selected from the Central Population Register and invited to apply for one of the citizens’ assemblies. Out of those who expressed interest, participants differing by age, gender, level of education and region were drawn and invited to join one of the three citizens’ assemblies in Salzburg, Graz or Vienna.

Four focus groups and one round table discussion were organized with the help of cooperation partners. Support was provided by Caritas’s social and family counselling centre in Vienna (Caritas Sozialberatung), Tandem’s outreach youth work (mobile Jugendarbeit Tandem), the Board of Trustees of Viennese Retirement Homes (KWP (Haus Prater)), the umbrella organization for self-help groups in Upper Austria (Dachverband der Selbsthilfe Oberösterreich) and the health centres FEM Süd and MEN.

Invitations were distributed nationwide via digital and analogue channels to participate online to mark the tenth anniversary of the Health Targets and on the participation platform. Experts who are actively involved with the Austrian Health Targets were invited personally to participate in the strategy process (2021–2022), as were representatives of relevant strategies and political decision makers. They played a part in the events and on the online participation platform.

- Austrian Health Targets
- Health Promotion Strategy
- National Strategy “Health at Work”
- Child and Adolescent Health Strategy
- Austrian Youth Strategy
- Dementia Strategy
- National Action Plan on women’s health
- National Action Plan on disabilities
- National Action Plan on nutrition
- National Action Plan on physical activity
- SDG (Sustainable Development Goals)
- Strategies on climate protection which are still being developed (co-benefits)

# Reviewing the results in the strategy process “Future Health Promotion”

After a content analysis of the online consultations, the proposals from all participation formats were reviewed for the “Forum for Future Health Promotion”. At the event they were evaluated in thematic workshops according to their effectiveness in relation to the following criteria:

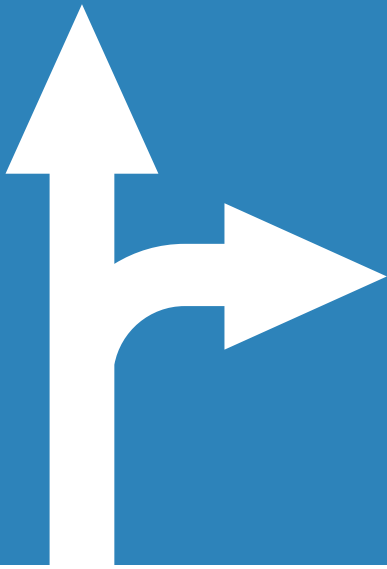
- The proposed measures meet a special need and are accepted by the general public and stakeholders alike.
- The proposed measures are resource efficient and highly visible.
- The proposed measures can build on existing capacities or contribute to the innovative development of new concepts.
- The proposed measures are also relevant for other sectors and there is a high level of commitment from both decision makers and actors.
- The proposed measures are of high quality and comply with the fundamental principles of health promotion.

Based on these key objectives, the workshops mapped out the next steps to anchor health promotion more vigorously. These key areas (“levers”) as well as important and effective measures recommended for their implementation were encapsulated in **ten bundles of measures for a health-promoting future in Austria** for this recommendation paper.

The bundles of measures pick up on the reorientation of society prompted by the WHO in its Geneva Charter for Well-being in the sense of a fair distribution of wealth, health and well-being which takes account of the limits of (natural) resources in our environment. Of special note are the guiding principles of **health equity** running through the entire process and the goal of **empowerment**.



Photo: Wolfgang Pecka



Creating health equity is the compass and orientation for all of the proposed bundles of measures because healthy life expectancy and quality of life are substantially shaped by **socioeconomic circumstances**. **Gender justice** also has an important role to play here. **Climate protection**, too, was addressed in several bundles of measures as an important factor for safeguarding health and quality of life.

In the review phase, the recommended measures were assigned to three areas of intervention to develop capacities in health promotion:

**Policy and partnerships, resources and implementation, knowledge and competences**

## The goal of this roadmap (and what it can't do)

The goal behind this recommendation paper (roadmap) is to formulate and prioritize measures for more health and quality of life for everybody living in Austria over the next five years. **It was developed with the involvement of the public at large and with actors from various sectors** and addresses a wealth of perspectives, ideas and concerns brought forward in the process for a future with more healthy years of life and more quality of life for everybody living in Austria.

The proposed bundles of measures should enable health promotion to be more strongly anchored in Austria and make the added value of health visible in various sectors. Due to the procedure which was followed, the bundles are clearly intersectoral in character and can only be realized when all key actors cooperate.

The participatory process did not foresee a process of political agreement across all possible sectors to formulate the text. Rather this roadmap should be seen as the starting point for creating alliances to implement selected bundles of measures.

**All actors are called upon to contribute to the implementation of this roadmap by entering into partnership with the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection.**

Some of the measures listed here have already been implemented on a smaller scale, for example as pilot projects, or are part of existing strategies. Other ideas are completely new or have been taken up for the first time in connection with health promotion. The roadmap integrates both types in equal measure.



# Ten bundles of measures for more quality of life and many healthy years of life for everybody

## What is recommended? Where should we start?

Ten bundles of measures are recommended for a future with a good quality of life, many healthy years of life and equity for everybody living in Austria:

### **A social society and ecological economic activity**

Promote socially and ecologically compatible economic activity in the interests of equity.

### **Health and social services**

Reorient health and social services, including care, leading to more health promotion and comprehensive prevention.

### **Climate-resilient living and social spaces promoting physical activity**

Encourage physical activity and living together respectfully and supportively in climate-resilient and environmentally friendly living spaces.

### **At work**

Promote integrated workplace health management and provide support, particularly to small and micro businesses, to ensure a health-promoting work environment.

### **Psychosocial well-being**

Promote psychosocial health, remove taboos around psychological stress and encourage respectful cooperation.

### **Growing up**

Design educational spaces and other facilities for children, young people and educators which promote health.

### **A sustainable food system**

Create a healthy, fair and sustainable food system, especially in institutional catering.

### **Resources for health promotion**

Boost financial and human resources, strengthen structures for and knowledge of health promotion and improve cooperation.

### **Population participation**

Strengthen the participation and active involvement of the general public as a key to more health.

### **Health literacy and information resources**

Produce low-threshold and targeted audience-specific health information resources and make them available (online).

# A social society and ecological economic activity

## **Promote socially and ecologically compatible economic activity in the interests of equity.**

Against the background of current crises, **socially and ecologically compatible economic activity** has an important contribution to make to preserving and increasing quality of life. Studies have shown that factors like education, income, gainful employment and affordable housing have a decisive effect on opportunities for health. Alternative forms of economic activity are also decisive for the protection of environmental resources and the preservation of our living space. In this way, the economy can contribute to preserving ecological resources and promoting the inclusion of vulnerable groups, for example by increasing the production of health-promoting food and reducing emissions as well as providing fair remuneration for gainful employment and including vulnerable groups in the labour market. The **reduction in social, financial and health inequalities** should serve as a compass for political decisions. Reducing the risks of poverty is crucial here; poverty among older women is a particular challenge in Austria. Measures for distributing available resources more fairly and reducing the social divide promote solidarity. This can reduce social tensions, boosting democratic structures, in turn, which are essential for quality of life.

### **Recommended measures:**

#### **Policy and partnerships**

- Communicate an orientation to alternative indicators to measure the success of a society.
- Push through health-promoting regulations in the interests of a well-being society with the help of subsidies and taxes.
- Implement integrated budgets (health in all policies).
- Set up partnerships between supporters of a well-being society in civil society, business and politics.
- Draw up a national convention for a well-being society.
- Expediate tax equity and income equality (e.g. taxes on wealth).
- Fight poverty and guarantee a decent life for everybody.
- Ensure affordable housing for everybody by setting up legal frameworks and avoid unoccupied residential properties.

#### **Resources and implementation**

- Expand support structures for care work and childcare and provide other low-threshold contact points in the community.
- Set up model projects and model regions for a well-being society.

#### **Knowledge and competences**

- Refine indicators, measurement tools and control instruments for a well-being society.
- Conduct health impact assessments for economic models on tax equity or greater social equality.

## Participants' voices

“The economic system must become more social and politics must create the parameters for that.”

(Citizens' assembly in Graz/southern Austria)

“Implement true-cost economics in relation to impact on the climate using price as a powerful lever.”

(Citizens' assembly in Salzburg/western Austria)

“A key aim is to eliminate social inequalities. Because life expectancy and healthy years of life correlate very strongly with the factors of income and education.”

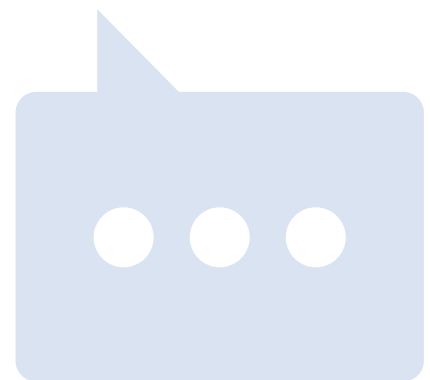
(Experts)

“An affordable life and enough money to participate in communal activities and to avoid social tensions and arguments over financial worries and existential fears.”

(Young people)

“Sufficient financial security and as many financial resources for daily living needs as necessary.”

(People from self-help organizations)



# Health and social services

## Reorient health and social services, including care, leading to more health promotion and comprehensive prevention.

Medical interventions can only reduce early mortality and morbidity by up to 20%. Lifestyle and environmental determinants, in contrast, contribute 50% to 70%.\* A stronger **orientation in health and social services towards health** rather than illness is seen as one possibility to address the mismatch between the resources used and their effect on health in the healthcare system. Along with maintaining comprehensive, good health care, the prerequisites for this are low-threshold preventive health care and ensuring sufficient human and financial resources in health and social services. This includes appreciation for people working in healthcare professions and a **healthy, attractive and collaborative work environment**. It is also important to take account of gender differences in care work and adequate financial security for those providing care and support in the informal sector. Proposals include restructuring professional training, establishing interdisciplinary teams and strengthening the communicative skills of those working in health and social services as well as expanding and safeguarding seamless, low-threshold and gender-sensitive access to health care, disease prevention and health promotion services. Networked providers in local communities, helping patients navigate the health service and getting them involved are seen as key factors to achieving greater efficiency in the health service, resulting in more time for patients and their concerns.

### Recommended measures:

#### Policy and partnerships

- Adjust quality indicators in the interests of health promotion.

#### Resources and implementation

- Ensure that structures (contact points) exist which enable members of the public and patients to get involved.
- Create seamless services for everybody with more cover for preventive health (especially dental health), provide access to psychosocial services and other therapies and set up integrated health strategies.
- Provide barrier-free access to health services particularly for people with cognitive impairments or language barriers.
- Implement, coordinate and consolidate local services such as community nurses, early help, social prescribing and health promotion in primary care.
- Offer health promotion in a joint basic training module for all healthcare professions (including doctors).
- Encourage cooperation between all professions in health and social services and create good working conditions and incentives for all occupational groups.
- Make workplace health promotion binding in health and social care institutions and encourage good networking practices or consolidate existing partnerships.

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\* McGinnis, J. Michael; Williams-Russo, Pamela; Knickman, James R. (2002). The case for more active policy attention to health promotion. *Health Affairs* 21(2), 78–93.

- Support addiction prevention, particularly in connection with legal addictive substances and to protect non-smokers, and set up recovery support programmes for addicts.

### **Knowledge and competences**

- Collect data on the needs of healthcare professionals.
- Empower healthcare professions to improve salutogenic and communicative competences.
- Expand advice and support for fellow sufferers (relatives, employers, etc.).

## **Participants' voices**

“There needs to be a paradigm shift in the health system and in care – towards needs-based, individualized use of public funds for the best possible long-term health benefits.”  
(Citizens' assembly in Vienna/eastern Austria)

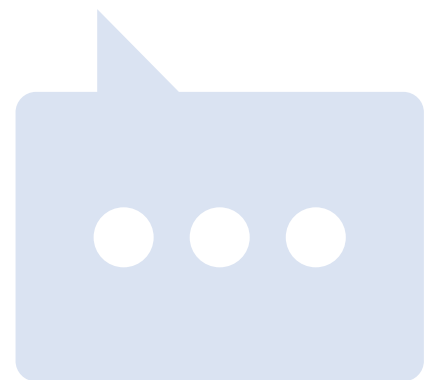
“Make care and healthcare professions more attractive through greater social recognition and appreciation as well as financial security and easier access to basic and advanced training.”  
(Citizens' assembly in Salzburg/western Austria)

“Establish local contact points for social concerns as information hubs.”  
(Experts)

“Improve mobile transport services so that it is easier to get to health facilities.”  
(Older adults and people from self-help organizations)

“Being able to communicate with medical staff.”  
(Migrants)

“Support family (caregivers): contact persons and psychological support, provide financial security, fund caregiver leave, provide caregiver training and incorporate the experiential knowledge of those who are affected in patient care.”  
(People from self-help organizations)



# Climate-resilient living and social spaces which promote physical activity

**Encourage physical activity and living together respectfully and supportively in climate-resilient and environmentally friendly living spaces.**

A health-promoting and climate-friendly spatial and social design for our towns, neighbourhoods and municipalities is not only crucial to preserve our basic needs but also boosts social cohesion and provides the necessary resources for meeting people regularly and doing physical activity in our everyday lives. The **development of local care networks and cultures of care (so-called caring communities)** is considered to be just as important as **climate-fit, health-promoting regional, settlement and urban planning**. It is vital to provide infrastructure and opportunities which support **active mobility and physical activity**, increasing the **activity levels of children and adults** alike. Broad accessibility as well as infrastructure and support structures for disadvantaged groups and their relatives are crucial for facilitating and fostering health-promoting living space and a sense of belonging for everybody in Austria.

## Recommended measures:

### Policy and partnerships

- Anchor statutory intersectoral measures to adapt to the climate crisis (including heat protection) and protect the climate.
- Enforce speed limits for motor vehicles.
- Preserve basic infrastructure in rural areas as well as in town and village centres for meeting people and fostering a social sense of belonging.
- Create competences for higher-level regional planning at federal level to expediate a nationwide spatial development concept for municipalities which also takes account of areas for physical activity and recreation as well as consumption-free spaces.

### Resources and implementation

- Invest in health-promoting, activity-friendly urban and regional planning with traffic-calming measures (e.g. by reducing the amount of parking).
- Design newly developed spaces in a participatory manner.
- Provide barrier-free public transport at a reasonable price (particularly in rural areas).
- Ensure accessibility in public space and for residential properties.
- Create and increase consumption-free spaces and low-threshold services close to people's homes to help them stay mentally, physically and socially active.
- Protect and create spaces for physical activity (e.g. green spaces, parks, cycle paths and footpaths) and sports areas; make existing infrastructure more accessible (e.g. opportunities for daily physical activity).
- Promote renaturation and develop building sites sensitively.
- Expand infrastructure for active mobility (e.g. parking facilities for bicycles).
- Increase the number of health-promoting caring communities nationwide.

## Knowledge and competences

- Disseminate knowledge on the positive effects of regular physical activity (e.g. recommendations for physical activity) and encourage active mobility, physical activity and sport.
- Promote a sense of community and identity through small-scale structures as well as cultural and sporting opportunities.
- Develop a framework concept for health-promoting caring communities, make their benefits visible and make methods known (best practice toolbox) which can support and expand them.

## Participants' voices

“Take urgent action on environmental and climate protection as an indispensable prerequisite for preserving our livelihoods.”

(Citizens' assembly in Salzburg/western Austria)

“Respectful co-existence boosts our quality of life.”

(Citizens' assembly in Graz/southern Austria)

“Provide consumption-free, flexible multi-purpose rooms for young people and spaces in nature which are free to use (e.g. barbecue areas).”

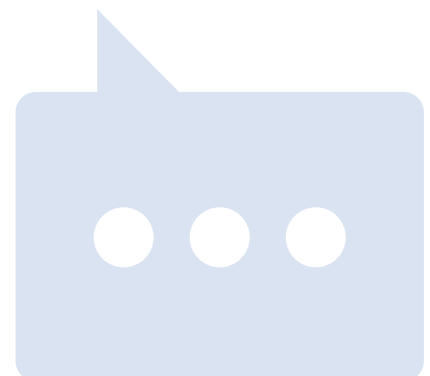
(Young people)

“Establish and roll out caring communities inspired by existing model regions.”

(Experts)

“Green spaces encourage physical activity.”

(Migrants)



# At work

## **Promote integrated workplace health management and provide support, particularly to small and micro businesses, to ensure a health-promoting work environment.**

The world of work is an important part of life for the vast majority of people of working age living in Austria. Due to digitalization and the climate crisis, for example, it is subject to constant change. Good and health-promoting working conditions can make a big difference to health, a key element of which is workplace health management. By combining workplace health promotion, occupational health and safety and operational integration management to create **integrated workplace health management**, synergies from all three areas can be better exploited. The National Strategy “Health at Work” provides a framework for this, according to which widespread awareness raising and targeted audience-specific concepts are needed to support different businesses, sectors and occupational groups **when creating a health-promoting work environment**. Particularly **disadvantaged sectors as well as small and micro businesses should be taken into consideration here**. It is also important to pay attention to the differing needs of employees and to design workplaces accordingly.

### **Recommended measures:**

#### **Policy and partnerships**

- Clarify tasks for actors and all relevant stakeholders in workplace health management and establish interface management for it.
- Agree on the “top ten topics at work” and introduce pertinent measures, for example by means of health conferences.
- Coordinate existing strategies more efficiently.

#### **Resources and implementation**

- Introduce coordinated inputs on topics concerning workplace health management within the scope of vocational training.
- Agree on and set up measures for strategies in workplace health management across sectors.
- Give support to pilot projects for workplace health management in small and micro businesses.

#### **Knowledge and competences**

- Facilitate and promote a common understanding of workplace health management with the help of campaigns and information.
- Conduct evidence and impact analyses for workplace health management regarding employers’ expectations in different settings and also regarding digital exchange formats and their effects.
- Expand regional network initiatives and clusters for workplace health promotion (should they be evaluated positively).
- Analyse motivators for workplace health management and provide evidence for its benefits (self-evaluation tools, key company data/return on investment, etc.).



## Participants' voices

“Boost health at work by incentivizing employers to attend to the health of their staff, monitoring provisions for occupational health and safety and consistently penalizing violations.”

(Citizens' assembly in Graz/southern Austria)

“Draw up tailor-made work concepts also for people with special needs.”

(People from self-help organizations)

“More opportunities for part-time work for older employees, secure employment and fair pay.”

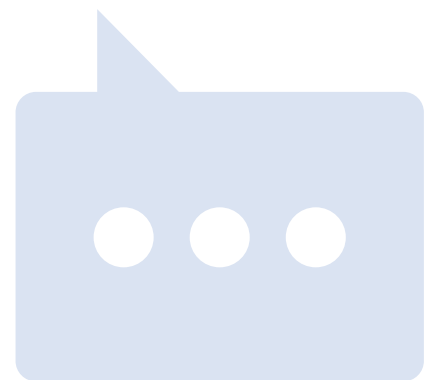
(People at risk of poverty)

“Reductions in sick leave, greater satisfaction and mutual support have a significant impact on costs and output.”

(Experts)

“Interested and supportive workmates and bosses as well as appreciative, respectful interactions and exchanges in the workplace and during apprenticeships.”

(Young people)



# Psychosocial well-being

**Promote psychosocial health, remove taboos around psychological stress and encourage respectful cooperation.**

Multiple social crises like the pandemic, war and climate crisis are triggering mental health issues in many people. **To boost mental health, healthy living conditions are relevant:** at work, at school, in our free time, in the neighbourhood and in our closest social and family circles. This is where health promotion has a role to play. Particularly in times when social networks and contacts are under more strain, due to the pandemic or economic developments, for example, it is important to help people maintain these networks and to support solidarity. Amongst other things, this requires boosting self-efficacy, a critical examination of self-images, body images and role models – especially to empower women and girls – as well as preventive measures against violence, particularly in domestic contexts. Society considers the removal of taboos around and the destigmatization of mental disorders to be an important precondition for improving the situation of those who are affected. One important suggestion is to **raise awareness of and educate people about psychosocial health**. In addition, easy and rapid access to counselling, therapy and support for those suffering from mental disorders should be ensured.

## Recommended measures:

### Policy and partnerships

- Develop a National Action Plan on psychosocial health.
- Develop an overarching strategy to boost the mental health of children and young people.
- Anchor self-help and peer counselling structurally within the community.

### Resources and implementation

- Ensure easy and rapid access to preventive measures, counselling and therapy for psychological stress and mental disorders, especially for people with cognitive impairments.
- Set up therapeutic services and provide advice for people who do not speak German as their native language.
- Sustain and boost psychosocial health at work, in kindergartens and schools (healthy working conditions, sufficient specialist staff and capacities).
- Implement or improve access to aids which make everyday life easier for older people and family caregivers as well as respite care and support services for people with caregiving responsibilities.
- Provide public-sector financial and organizational support for local community-building initiatives.

### Knowledge and competences

- Boost health-promoting communication and personality development, also at school (for the school community).
- Introduce measures to raise awareness of psychosocial health (at school, at work, in the family, etc.), for example with information campaigns.

## Participants' voices

“Focus on integrated solutions for psychosocial care (taking account of vulnerable groups like children and young people, people with a refugee or migratory background, LGBTQI+ people).”

(Experts)

“Improve preventive measures and therapy for mental disorders.”

(Citizens' assembly in Vienna/eastern Austria)

“Increase the number of centres offering psychological counselling services, particularly for refugees.”

(Migrants)

“Being able to make use of professional help and treatment for psychological problems (also via hotlines).”

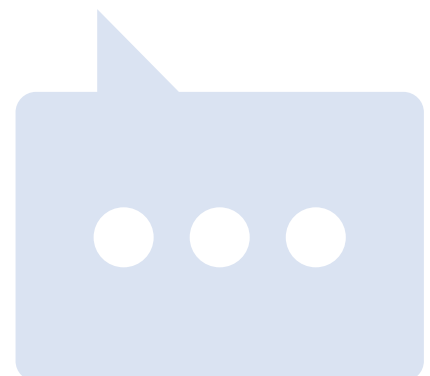
(Young people)

“Acceptance and an open society: taboos should be addressed.”

(People from self-help organizations)

“Existential fears and the feeling of being alone in a stressful situation. Experiences gained from an individual's own difficult situation can be used for counselling other people in a similar situation.”

(People at risk of poverty)



# Growing up

## Design educational and other facilities for children, young people and educators which promote health.

Early childhood is formative for the rest of our lives. Support and encouragement from the very beginning can positively affect children's quality of life, their socioeconomic situation and health well into adulthood. Everyday practical support for families as well as health promotion in kindergartens and schools, including where they overlap with extracurricular and leisure activities, can potentially achieve a massive impact. Measures encouraging a **holistic, health-promoting design for educational institutions** address the health of children, young people and educators alike. Recommendations include communicating knowledge about health and nurturing socio-communicative and emotional competences as well as personality development in children, young people and their caregivers. A better staffing ratio in all educational institutions and good working conditions are vital, as is fair pay in educational professions. It would be particularly important to **boost the status of jobs in the field of elementary education** and to provide high-quality affordable childcare nationwide. Another prerequisite is to set up health-promoting infrastructure in educational institutions, such as space for physical activities, community kitchens and gardens, along with appropriate educational provisions.

### Recommended measures:

#### Policy and partnerships

- Revise or “declutter” educational frameworks for kindergartens and curricula at schools.
- Initiate a participatory process to revise curricula for teacher education programmes and other educators.
- Provide sufficient affordable and high-quality childcare (as a legal entitlement) nationwide.
- Create the conditions for less time pressure and continuous learning at school to boost equity and improve the integration of key issues (like health promotion).

#### Resources and implementation

- Continue to encourage and implement health-promoting structures in schools.
- Provide support systems in schools for children with disabilities as well as for the educators assigned to them.
- Offer professional support to educators (school development counselling, personality development and health promotion).
- Foster good working conditions in schools and childcare facilities with supervision and enough time to prepare.
- Improve staffing ratios.
- Launch pilot projects for “daily physical activity” for children in all educational institutions.
- Conduct a high-profile campaign to attract more men to work in elementary education.

## Knowledge and competences

- Conduct health impact assessments before measures are set up or rolled out, particularly for those aimed at children and young people.
- Roll out evaluated programmes in educational institutions as well to boost psychosocial protective factors in children and young people.
- Introduce opportunities to boost health literacy in schools, particularly for socially disadvantaged groups.

## Participants' voices

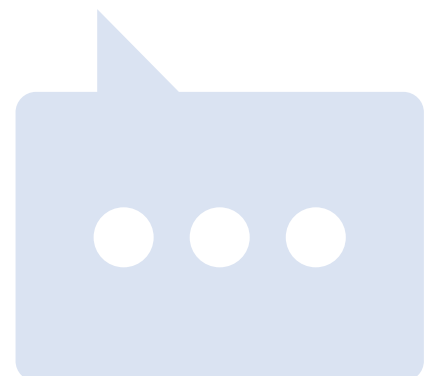
“Set up resources and infrastructure for health education at school (cooking, healthy nutrition, physical activity, etc.).”  
(Citizens' assembly in Salzburg/western Austria)

“Professional teachers who treat us young people fairly and equally, regardless where we come from and which language we speak or what we look like.”  
(Young people)

“Improve the occupational health determinants of educators' professional profiles [...] so that they stay healthy and can actively influence the health and well-being of their charges.”  
(Experts)

“Provide help and support for children and parents to cope with homework.”  
(Migrants)

“Teach and make use of healthy communication (mutual recognition, esteem and respect, nonviolent language).”  
(Citizens' assembly in Vienna/eastern Austria)



# A sustainable food system

## **Create a healthy, fair and sustainable food system, especially in institutional catering.**

A balanced, high-quality and age-appropriate diet which meets individual needs is essential for a healthy development and many healthy years of life. **Health-promoting institutional catering** in care facilities and educational institutions, companies, retirement homes or even clubs can boost healthy nutrition for everybody. Healthy and sustainable institutional catering promotes social interaction and boosts climate and health literacy. It can also make a contribution to food security, regardless of social and economic circumstances. An environmentally safe and climate-friendly diet which is more plant based is also key to preserving the natural environment and reducing adverse effects on the environment, climate, humans and animals.

To create health-promoting living spaces in the interests of planetary health, it is crucial to **reframe the food system (“from field to plate”)**. Climate-friendly, healthy and affordable food should be promoted, especially by political means. Important goals here range from tax adjustments and subsidies to regional food production which also respects animal welfare and reduces food waste.

### **Recommended measures:**

#### **Policy and partnerships**

- Adapt the legal framework to avoid food waste (particularly in the retail sector and in institutional catering).
- Use tax adjustments on food items to encourage sustainable and health-promoting consumer behaviour.
- Make healthy, regional, organic food available which is affordable for everybody.
- Expediate health-promoting institutional catering in companies, educational institutions and facilities, social, care and nursing facilities.
- Mobilize farmers and agricultural workers to get involved in environmentally friendly, organic farming.

#### **Resources and implementation**

- Ensure healthy food, particularly for children and young people, for example through free organic and balanced meals in schools and kindergartens.
- Prevent obesity and stigmatization resulting from that by means of healthy meals and information for children but also for older people.
- Disseminate knowledge on sustainable, health-promoting, increasingly plant-based cooking.
- Create the necessary infrastructure (dining rooms, kitchens, etc.) and knowledge for institutional catering in various settings.
- Ensure that there is sufficient agricultural land and capacities for healthy nourishment and climate-friendly agriculture.
- Implement measures to guarantee animal welfare and biodiversity as well as to reduce land consumption.

## Knowledge and competences

- Be transparent and provide information on production chains, plant- and animal-based foods and their impact on the climate and health (e.g. food labelling)
- Carry out a current status survey/evaluation of institutional catering nationwide.

## Participants' voices

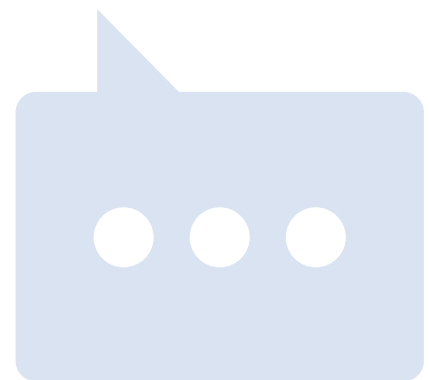
“Healthy food creates the basis for many healthy years of life.”  
(Citizens' assembly in Vienna/eastern Austria)

“Bring about structural change in food production in favour of regional, sustainable production and marketing.”  
(Citizens' assembly in Graz/southern Austria)

“Provide information on production chains and where foodstuffs come from, shift towards a more plant-based diet at school and work and switch agricultural subsidies to more healthy, regional and organic food.”  
(Citizens' assembly in Salzburg/western Austria)

“Encourage healthy and varied food in institutional catering which meets individual needs.”  
(Older adults)

“The school environment is decisive for encouraging sustainable and health-promoting dietary behaviour in childhood and adolescence.”  
(Experts)



# Resources for health promotion

## **Boost financial and human resources, strengthen structures for and knowledge of health promotion and improve cooperation.**

In order to anchor health promotion through cooperation across policy areas and to initiate it in all sectors, it is necessary to have clearly defined mechanisms, incentives, human resources and adequately distributed competences. **Joint funding across multiple institutions or sectors**, for example, can introduce new ways of financing health promotion. This should result in the **structural anchoring of health promotion in all institutions and public bodies**, particularly at regional and municipal level, facilitating measures at the interface of health and social issues which could help cover the needs of disadvantaged groups in particular.

Structures and knowledge are important prerequisites for evidence-based and demand-driven planning and design of health-promoting services. Here resources are needed for participatory, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research in the field of health promotion as well as closer connections to international research in order to build up and secure capacities for health promotion in Austria.

### **Recommended measures:**

#### **Policy and partnerships**

- Develop a national strategy for quality and funding guidelines in health promotion.
- Encourage stakeholders' commitment to joint funding across multiple institutions and sectors.
- Ensure sustainable funding mechanisms, for example via the fiscal equalization scheme and government programmes.

#### **Resources and implementation**

- Allocate a budget for research into health promotion.
- Enable long-term funding and publicly administered health promotion organizations at municipal level to convert projects into programmes.

#### **Knowledge and competences**

- Create professorships for health promotion and public health.
- Provide support for junior researchers.
- Communicate research findings to the general public in a fact-based and generally understandable manner.
- Expand existing non-profit structures to attract funding at EU level for research into health promotion.



## Participants' voices

“Promote interdisciplinary research which highlights the co-benefits for health and other sectors of society.”

(Experts)

“A more balanced distribution of resources between curative and preventive health care plays an important role in leadership, lawmaking and strategies.”

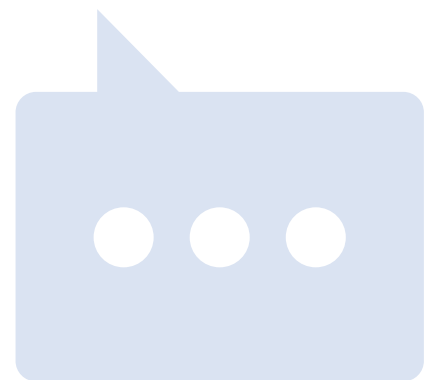
(Experts)

“Expand funding opportunities in the field of health promotion without fail – many organizations cannot finance it (any more) from their regular budgets.”

(Experts)

“It is crucial to foster greater interconnections between sectors of society, create a strong knowledge base and provide appropriate resources for prevention and health promotion.”

(Experts)



# Population participation

## **Strengthen the participation and active involvement of the general public as a key to more health.**

Everybody involved in the process highlighted encouraging participation and involvement at all levels as a key aspect of a health-promoting future. When members of the public are involved, this plays a crucial role in understanding the population's needs better and aligning measures in a targeted manner. Two important points are setting up **permanent opportunities and appropriate parameters for participation**.

The health system systematically including patients' perspectives is one example; another would be participatory design in relation to lifeworlds in the context of work and school or also for housing and living space. In participatory processes it is particularly important to ensure that vulnerable sections of the population are included and formats are chosen which also address social groups whose voices are usually not heard so often so that **everybody living in Austria is empowered to participate actively and help shape the future**.

### **Recommended measures:**

#### **Policy and partnerships**

- Foster political commitment to participation at national and regional level (set up the appropriate structures).
- Develop a participatory strategy (step-by-step plan) accompanied by a panel of interest groups.

#### **Resources and implementation**

- Institute a centralized overview of opportunities for and experiences of participation (online portals for mapping the needs and sentiments of members of the public).
- Set up hubs/contact points for stakeholders and those interested in participating for questions which need addressing (transparent structure: public, low-threshold, informative, top-down/bottom-up).
- Run citizens' assemblies nationwide to set topics in the entire policy cycle, including for people working in healthcare professions and on socially relevant issues (e.g. "How do we achieve a well-being society?")
- Set up patient councils in the health system.

#### **Knowledge and competences**

- Boost participatory research and raise researchers' awareness of new issues relevant to current needs (concomitant research, research methodology, (pilot) projects, research funding).
- Provide inclusive information on and clarification of participation formats as well as training courses for members of the public.
- Provide peer training courses for multipliers to ensure accessibility via settings (e.g. schools) and expand communication channels.

## Participants' voices

“Set up infrastructure and opportunities to enable and ensure inclusion for everybody in society.”

(Citizens' assembly in Graz/southern Austria)

“Put more emphasis on broad, participatory processes in the planning and implementation of individual measures (which are nevertheless coordinated overall) in the context of health promotion.”

(Experts)

“Give us opportunities to have a say so that our voices can be heard, we can set our own priorities and help shape the future.”

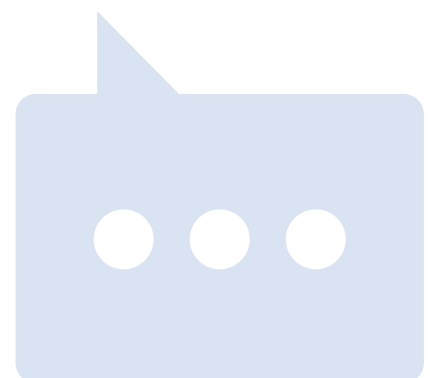
(Young people)

“Give us a voice and more opportunities to make decisions in retirement homes and in various spheres of life.”

(Older adults)

“Incorporate the experiential knowledge of those who are affected in the treatment of patients.”

(People from self-help organizations)



# Health literacy and information resources

**Produce low-threshold and targeted audience-specific health information resources and make them available (online).**

**Access to easy-to-understand, well prepared, scientifically based health information resources and communication on health-related topics** are regarded as tools which help individuals act independently to promote their health. Low-threshold communication about health brings about **sensitization** and raises **awareness**, thus boosting health literacy. It can also contribute to raising awareness of violence and its consequences for health. Here it is important to focus on avoiding violence against women. Alongside educational institutions, the media play an important role in conveying this information. Social media in particular are still underdeveloped when it comes to disseminating reliable information on health. Many people find it hard to decide whether the information they find is sound and helpful. In addition to encouraging appropriate levels of media literacy, the use of media to communicate health-related topics should be optimized. Digital space can also be used more intensively for networking and provides many opportunities for exchanging information, for example in self-help groups. Better ways should also be found to provide health information resources for vulnerable, hard-to-reach groups, such as low-threshold services in places where people spend time (post offices, public transport, etc.) as well as via further telephone hotlines and existing services (e.g. community nurses). It is suggested that further services are set up for lifelong health education and strengthening health literacy.

## Recommended measures:

### Policy and partnerships

- Disseminate health information in places where people spend time (post offices, banks, pubs, etc.).
- Disseminate health information using all media and integrate it in public broadcasting in particular.

### Resources and implementation

- Provide easily accessible information on counselling and mediation services.
- Launch targeted audience-specific information campaigns on measures which promote health and avoid health risks.
- Develop easy-to-use platforms providing information about services.
- Anchor health promotion in schools.
- Strengthen the presence of topics relating to health promotion in social media.
- Use networking via social media to exchange useful information (e.g. family caregivers).

## Knowledge and competences

- Boost media literacy and provide training to deal with the abundance of information and fake news on social media.
- Produce understandable, scientifically sound health information resources for specific target groups which take account of gender-specific differences.
- Improve health literacy.
- Provide information about health and prevention in general but also specifically in relation to the topic of “addiction” (e.g. smoking).

## Participants’ voices

“Shed light on health-promoting measures and health risks, for example in information campaigns.”

(Citizens’ assembly in Vienna/eastern Austria)

“Teach children and parents how to deal with digital media.”

(Citizens’ assembly in Salzburg/western Austria)

“Provide sound, targeted audience-specific, easily accessible information resources and structures for staying healthy.”

(Citizens’ assembly in Graz/southern Austria)

“Use social media to communicate health-related topics and to help people in similar situations benefit from networking.”

(Migrants)

“Automation in everyday life must be accompanied by age-appropriate operability and manageability.”

(Older adults)

“Support is vital in our digital world.”

(People from self-help organizations)

“Make increased use of media to disseminate health information in order to improve health literacy.”

(Experts)

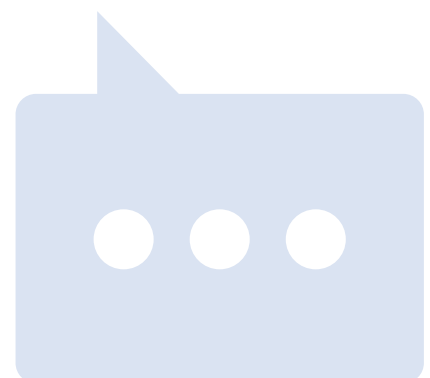




Photo: Markus Huber

# The way forward to more quality of life: next steps

This recommendation paper (roadmap) has the goal of specifying and prioritizing concrete measures for more health and quality of life for everybody living in Austria over the next five years.

On the part of the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, these bundles of measures have already been used to set topics for important ongoing and future decision-making processes, such as updating its **health promotion strategy** and when negotiating the fiscal equalization scheme. The ensuing papers define concrete deadlines and milestones, determining whether and how the topics will be incorporated in the strategic development of health promotion in Austria.



Photo: Irina Vana and Lisa Schlee

The competence centres in the **Agenda for Health Promotion** have already started to implement bundles of measures relating to the key areas of health and social services, climate-resilient living and social spaces promoting physical activity, growing up, psychosocial well-being, population participation, a sustainable food system and health literacy and information resources.

The **Austrian Health Promotion Fund** will prioritize these key areas in its work programme from 2024 onwards and provide support for them in its implementation and support programmes.

Further **opportunities for participation** will be provided by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection and the Competence Centre for Future Health Promotion to involve members of the general public, experts and stakeholders in the implementation phase and to inform them about progress as well. Information on current opportunities for participation is provided on the website [agenda.gesundheitsfoerderung.at](https://agenda.gesundheitsfoerderung.at). At the end of 2023, for example, members of the public will be invited to a presentation in the ministry covering the measures which have been implemented.



Photo: Norman Vaughan

**Alliances** will be forged to get key measures off the ground and incorporate them in the implementation plans for ongoing and future strategies. These include, in particular, the implementation of the Austrian Health Targets, the National Strategy “Health at Work”, the Child and Adolescent Health Strategy and the Austrian Youth Strategy, the Dementia Strategy and the Austrian Tobacco and Nicotine Strategy as well as National Action Plans on women’s health, disabilities, nutrition and physical activity.

## Legal notice

The foundations for the content of this document were developed in the participatory strategy process “Future Health Promotion” and reworked by an editorial team.

In addition to the editorial team (project team consisting of representatives of the Austrian National Public Health Institute/Austrian Health Promotion Fund and the ministry), people were invited to give feedback on the first draft who had been actively involved as facilitators in one of the strategy workshops as well as working group leaders on the health targets and people responsible for selected strategies which are relevant for health promotion.

### Commissioned by:

Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz (Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection) as part of the “Agenda for Health Promotion”

### Carried out by:

Kompetenzzentrum Zukunft Gesundheitsförderung (Competence Centre for Future Health Promotion, part of the business unit Fonds Gesundes Österreich, the Austrian Health Promotion Fund, at Gesundheit Österreich GmbH, the Austrian National Public Health Institute)

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### Cooperation partners:

Support when setting up the Citizens’ Assemblies in Graz and Salzburg: Styria vitalis, AVOS

Setting up the focus groups: Caritas Sozialberatung, FEM Süd, MEN, KWP (Haus Prater), bOJA, mobile Jugendarbeit Tandem, Dachverband der Selbsthilfe Oberösterreich

### Photos:

Forum: Wolfgang Pecka

Citizens’ assembly in Vienna: Norman Vaughan (bettertogether)

Citizens’ assembly in Salzburg: Markus Huber, MA ([www.markushuber.net](http://www.markushuber.net))

Citizens’ assembly in Graz: Ulla Sladek (<https://www.ullasladek.at/>)

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