

Over the past few months, our project has organized and hosted several key events, many in collaboration with the World Health Organization and with continued support from HaDEA. JA ImpleMENTAL continues to make significant strides in the area of mental health, with our best practices making a meaningful impact in the field.

Utrecht, the Netherlands

February 28 - 29, 2024

The meeting held in Utrecht was our **first thematic workshop on sustainability**, targeting countries implementing the Belgian Mental Health Reform, MSPC members, and the Stakeholder Forum. This two-day hybrid workshop, organized in collaboration with colleagues from WHO Europe, attracted nearly 100 participants both onsite and online.

The workshop began with guest speakers Bernard Jacob and José Miguel Caldas de Almeida, who shared their expertise on how to conceptualize sustainability for community mental health. What should it entail? What can we learn from past experiences?

Our next guest speakers, Raluca Nica and René Keet, provided insights into policy engagement strategies and the benefits of using a fidelity scale for community mental health (with F-ACT as a lead example), which can be crucial for sustainability. Participants then discussed how these strategies apply in different countries and what we can learn from each other.

To close out the first day, colleagues from Semmelweis University presented a fictional case study on organizing a policy dialogue. They emphasized the importance of policy dialogues as a tool for ensuring the sustainability of community mental health initiatives.



The second day of the workshop began with an in-depth review of the **WHO guidance on mental health policy and strategic action plans**, which is currently under development. This guidance integrates a human-rights-based approach and thoroughly addresses social and structural determinants.

The next guidance presented and discussed was the **WHO guidance on Mental Health, Human Rights, and Legislation**. This document begins by outlining challenges and current legislation and concludes with actionable steps. It also includes a checklist to help countries assess whether their legislation aligns with this approach.

The workshop concluded on an inspiring note with a presentation and site visit to **Enik Recovery College**, led by Ton Verspoor and Martijn Kole. They provided practical insights into the development and importance of a 100% peer-led recovery college. They also explained how they secured municipal funding for Enik Recovery College, the new style of support offered, training, and more. "We try to protect space to grow without exclusion and separation; everyone is welcome," they emphasized.





March 6 -7, 2024

Copenhagen, Denmark

Around 50 participants from 21 countries and 39 organizations attended the two-day JA ImpleMENTAL **Member State Policy Committee Meeting** and hybrid seminar, held at the **UN City** in Copenhagen.

On the first day, the successful collaboration between policymakers, country coordinators, and members of the JA ImpleMENTAL team was highlighted, with examples of good practices and a wealth of shared ideas and experiences. The opening speeches were delivered by Vasileia Konte, JA ImpleMENTAL Coordinator, and **Ledia Lazeri**, Regional Advisor for Mental Health and Substance Use (WHO Office for Europe).

The speakers reflected on the necessary steps to turn a draft strategy into a formal strategy and initiate further actions for sustainable implementation. The discussions covered topics such as the importance of official approval, the binding nature of a strategy and for whom it applies, sources of funding, and the coordination of implementation efforts.



The next session introduced the JA guide on organizing policy dialogue sessions for sustainability. The day concluded with examples of countries' implementation progress. Speakers presented the outcomes of their efforts in implementing suicide prevention programs in Iceland and Estonia, as well as the reform of community-based mental health services in Spain and Malta. Other countries shared their implementation achievements through team presentations. It was discussed how activities and network expertise are to be sustained and how results can be best embedded in national policies and practices.

The meeting underscored the importance of political will within each country for effective implementation, along with the dedication of professionals and the broader population to embrace reforms and achieve the highest European standards.

On the second day, numerous examples of good practices, visions, arguments, and implementation cases were presented in a relaxed but productive atmosphere. A workshop was also held on launching a campaign to employ individuals with lived experience (experts by experience) in policymaking, service delivery, training, and research roles.

Good practices for sustaining the capacities of mental health networks were shared. Jenny Telander presented a Swedish example of intersectoral collaboration for sustainable mental health and suicide prevention policy, while Anja Kare Vedelsby introduced the Danish example of integrating lived experience into sustainable mental health policy and service delivery.

Following Ledia Lazeri's presentation of a mental health coalition example, the meeting moved on to a presentation by Antonis Kousoulis, Director of the Global Health Action Network, who spoke about the importance of awareness, advocacy, and communication for mental health.

Melita Murko, Technical Officer for MHF at WHO, and **Jason Maurer**, Communication Focal Point for MHF at WHO Europe, opened an engaging discussion on holding policymakers accountable. This was followed by a workshop titled "Highlighting the Importance of Lived Experience as the Missing Link for Accountable Policy-Making."

The meeting concluded with remarks from Vasileia Konte, who emphasized that the strength of the JA ImpleMENTAL network lies in working together to create change through the sharing of experiences and ideas with other policy committee members.



Milan, Italy

April 8 -7, 2024



The two-day event, held at the institutional headquarters of the Lombardy Region, brought together 74 participants, both on-site and online. The focus was on the **implementation process of pilot actions** in the 11 implementing countries (out of 14 participating in the project).

On the first day, guests were welcomed by the organizing team—**Antonio Lora, Teresa Di Fiandra, and Nathalie Belorgey**—and were introduced to the meeting's topics by the Joint Action coordinator, **Vasileia Konte**.

The morning sessions discussed the main strategic areas of **the Belgian reform model**, with Cyprus and Lithuania providing insights on how they integrated a community-based and user-centered recovery approach into their mental health services. Germany showcased best practices for developing relationships with relevant stakeholders, while Spain presented software that facilitates the integration of data and information between the social and (mental) health sectors.

The University of Bicocca and Politecnico of Milano introduced **the Dashboard**, a tool developed to transform electronic health records into indicators aimed at improving the countries' ability to analyze (mental) health data, as well as monitor and evaluate mental health services and their quality.

Furthermore, the Mario Negri Institute provided an initial analysis of the training conducted the previous year in JA countries, which aimed to prepare and support their implementation of best practices. They also presented the Training Kit, which consists of results and materials collected during the trainings. At the end of the first day, interactive sessions offered participants the opportunity to review the implementation process in their respective countries and exchange experiences.



The second day began with focus groups led by a team from the University of Applied Sciences in Bochum, exploring the **Theory of Change (ToC)** framework, which has been vital for the implementing countries. The final session of the meeting addressed the work plan and upcoming activities of the project, with a focus on future deliverables and final reports.

The event concluded with a visit to **two mental health facilities in Milan**, offering participants an invaluable opportunity to observe the structure of Italy's community-based mental health care system for children, adolescents, and adults.



Vilnius, Lithuania

April 22 -24, 2024

The Lithuanian capital hosted a three-day **workshop on human rights**, in collaboration with the **WHO Regional Office for Europe**. The event was attended by over 70 participants, including the JA ImpleMENTAL coordinator and esteemed guests who supported the meeting.

To introduce participants to the Lithuanian mental health care system, a visit was organized to the city's Mental Health Care Center, which also included a tour of the nearby Valakampiai Social Services Campus. The tour covered not only the day center but also facilities for individuals in need of long-term care. The workshop was also attended by the center's employees and patients.

The second and third days of the event were dedicated to **WHO's QualityRights training**, focusing on two key topics: core training on recovery and the right to heal, and core training on legal capacity and the right to decide. **Melita Murko**, a representative of WHO Europe, presented the achievements of the organization's initiative so far, with Croatia and Lithuania sharing their experiences in implementing the WHO QualityRights initiative in their respective countries.

During these final two days, participants were educated on the reorientation of care towards the client's needs and an individualized approach to the recovery process with the active participation of the user. One of the key takeaways was that mental health care should always respect human rights.

This event shows how our project aims to create a legacy Network of JA ImpleMENTAL Ambassadors on WHO QualityRights training.



Brussels, Belgium

May 22 -23, 2024

Under the pan-European Mental Health Coalition, our JA and WHO Europe convened a workshop focused on enhancing leadership and services in mental health, bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders with the goal of facilitating sustainable transformation in mental health services, making them more accessible and inclusive across all stages of life.

The event opened with welcoming remarks from the WHO Regional Director for Europe, **Hans Kluge**. Other notable speakers included Belgium's Minister of Social Affairs, **Frank Vanderbroucke**; DG Sante Adviser for Stakeholder Relations, **Stefan Schreck**; and **Natasha Azzopardi Muscat**, Director of the Division of Country Health Policies and Systems at the WHO Regional Office for Europe. The opening session was moderated by WHO Regional Advisor, Ms. **Ledia Lazeri**. The official session focused on addressing stigma and discrimination in mental health. JA ImpleMENTAL's country case studies on implementing best practices, along with a project overview, were a valuable contributions.

On the second day, the workshop highlighted the importance of maximizing investments in mental health, including cost-benefit analyses. Mapping the workforce in mental health was identified as a key element of sustainable mental health care. Programs should address the specific needs of groups such as youth and the elderly who suffer from mental disorders.

Ensuring the continuity of care during the transition from child and adolescent mental health services to adult mental health services is crucial. Resilience centers for addressing trauma are vital components of national health systems, and supported employment transitions—whether returning from sick leave or moving between jobs—should be reflected in policy changes. Incorporating the resources of primary health care is essential to ensuring a robust mental health system.

In the closing session, our coordinator, **Ms. Vasileia Konte**, emphasized the importance of cooperation among all partners, while WHO Regional Advisor Ms. Ledia Lazeri noted that learning from each other is essential. Mr. Georgios Margetidis, Head of Section for the EU4Health program at HADEA, concluded by stating that mental health is a crucial aspect of public health, and that synergizing efforts is key to success.



Athens, Greece

June 27 -28, 2024

A two-day JA ImpleMENTAL **Member State Policy Committee (MSPC)** meeting was held in Athens. The meeting was opened by **Dimitrios Paraskevis**, a Member of the Board of Directors of NPHO, **Bernadett Bulyovszky**, JA ImpleMENTAL representative, and **Ledia Lazëri**, Regional Adviser for Mental Health at the WHO Regional Office for Europe. The introductory session ended with a Keynote Presentation delivered by **Vasileia Konte**, the JA ImpleMENTAL Coordinator, providing an overview of the implementation process so far.



In the second session, countries presented their progress for the **Belgian best practice** and the **SUPRA best practice**. Each country shared insights into their implementation, highlighting the achievements made thus far and outlining their strategic plans for advancing mental health initiatives, providing a valuable opportunity for knowledge exchange.

Stefan Craenen from the European Commission delivered an online presentation on a comprehensive approach to mental health, highlighting the synergies with JA ImpleMENTAL.

In the third session, **Joy Ladurner** of JA ImpleMENTAL conducted a workshop where participants utilized their insights gained from working on the project. Later on, **Maria Vandoni** from Mario Negri IRCCS presented a Training kit adapted for a community-based mental health system.

The final session of the day featured a combined **Capacity Building** segment and **Stakeholder Forum**, where important topics were discussed, with Ledia Lazeri addressing WHO Europe's next steps. Additionally, **Simon Vasseur-Bacle** presented on **Quality Rights Training**.

The Stakeholder Forum input included contributions from **Jutta Lindert** of the EUPHA Mental Health Section, **Francisca Lopez** from OECD, **Thomas Niederkrotenthaler** from IASP, and **Hannes Jarke** from EuroHealthNet. This forum provided an opportunity for key stakeholders to share their perspectives and collaborate on future directions for mental health policies and initiatives.

The second day of the meeting began with the first presentation by JA's **Alexander Grabenhofer-Eggerth**, in which he detailed the critical steps needed to transition from a draft strategy to a fully implemented strategy, emphasizing sustainable practices and methods to ensure a lasting impact.



This was followed by a Q&A session led by his colleague Joy Ladurner, focusing on how indicators could be chosen and communicated wisely to enhance the impact at the population level. In an online lecture, **Matteo Monzio Compagnoni** discussed the creation and utilization of a comprehensive **dashboard** of mental health indicators designed to support and enhance the quality of mental healthcare services, showcasing innovative approaches and practical applications. **Vasileia Konte** held a presentation about implementation science and its practices, explaining how **PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) cycles** can be used for developing country-specific sustainability plans and making informed decisions. This was followed by **Jutta Lindert's** presentation on the application of data for research, policy, and practice, highlighting the importance of data-driven approaches in shaping effective mental health policies.

Rosa Fernandez Tarazaga from FFIS then shared a case study from Spain, demonstrating the practical application and outcomes of PDSA cycles in their context of their country, offering valuable insights and lessons learned.

Dimitrios Paraskevis reflected on the critical role of continuous data monitoring and analysis in enhancing the effectiveness and reach of health interventions. The final session of the day was dedicated to the **core elements for the sustainability** of the JA ImpleMENTAL project at the European level. This session included an interactive workshop focused on developing a roadmap for a common sustainability plan, encouraging participants to collaborate and share their perspectives on ensuring the project's long-term viability and impact.

The day concluded with a presentation by **Corinne Salinas** of HaDEA. Salinas discussed the importance of transferring successful pilot projects into mainstream practices, highlighting strategies for scaling up and integrating best practices into broader health systems.

The session wrapped up with a comprehensive discussion, integrating various perspectives and insights shared throughout the day, and setting the stage for continued collaboration and innovation in mental health strategy and implementation.