



GENEVA CHARTER FOR WELL-BEING

The Geneva Charter for Well-being underlines the urgency of creating sustainable “well-being societies”, committed to achieving equitable health now and for future generations without breaching ecological limits. The Charter builds on the outcomes of the 10th Global Conference on Health Promotion, hosted in Geneva, Switzerland, and virtually on 13–15 December 2021, and the legacy of the Ottawa Charter and previous global conferences on health promotion.

THE URGENCY TO ACT

The world faces complex and interrelated crises, but they impact countries in different ways. Recent pandemics have exposed the fractures in society and highlighted the ecological, political, commercial, digital and social determinants of health and health inequities, within and between social groups and nations. Climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, rapid urbanization, geopolitical conflict and militarization, demographic change, population displacement, poverty, and widespread inequity create risks of future crises even more severe than those experienced today.

Responses require investments that integrate planetary, societal, community and individual health and well-being, as well as changes in social structures to support people to take control of their lives and health. Fundamental redirection of societal values and action consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are required.

FOUNDATIONS OF WELL-BEING

Well-being societies provide the foundations for all members of current and future generations to thrive on a healthy planet, no matter where they live. Such societies apply bold policies and transformative approaches that are underpinned by:

- A positive vision of health that integrates physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being.
- The principles of human rights, social and environmental justice, solidarity, gender and inter-generational equity, and peace.
- A commitment to sustainable low-carbon development grounded in reciprocity and respect among humans and making peace with Nature.
- New indicators of success, beyond gross domestic product, that take account of human and planetary wellbeing and lead to new priorities for public spending.
- The focus of health promotion on empowerment, inclusivity, equity, and meaningful participation.



21ST CENTURY HEALTH PROMOTION RESPONSE

Creating well-being societies requires coordinated action in five areas:

1 VALUE, RESPECT AND NURTURE PLANET EARTH AND ITS ECOSYSTEMS

A healthy planet is essential for the health and well-being of current and future generations and for enabling all to flourish. Well-being societies prioritize a rapid, just transition to a low-carbon economy to keep rises in temperature below 1.5°C this century. They provide access to clean energy for all, enhance biodiversity, reduce resource depletion and pollution, support harmonious relations between humans and nature and center indigenous knowledge and leadership. They promote water and food systems that reduce harm and promote healthy nutrition (including breastfeeding). Well-being societies have strong links to “One Health” and planetary health, including enhancing pandemic preparedness and improving health and equity.

2 DESIGN AN EQUITABLE ECONOMY THAT SERVES HUMAN DEVELOPMENT WITHIN PLANETARY AND LOCAL ECOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES

Well-being societies ensure decent, secure work, fair trade, inclusive social protection systems, production and consumption systems based on the principles of a circular economy, no structural discrimination, sustainable urban transitions and respect for and preservation of natural ecosystems. Well-being economies recognize labour rights and the contributions of the informal economy, including care provided by caregivers, families and communities. They support the prevention and reduction of communicable and noncommunicable diseases through effective regulation of the commercial determinants of health. Well-being economies seek to reduce harm through enforcing accountability and regulation of digital and the arms industries. They acknowledge and rectify colonial and economic policies that hamper economic and social development. Well-being priorities are translated into action through investments in health, well-being budgets, social protection and legal and fiscal strategies that ensure a healthier, sustainable economy.

3 DEVELOP HEALTHY PUBLIC POLICY FOR THE COMMON GOOD

In a well-being society, governments are the stewards of all society's assets for a healthy, sustainable, equitable planet on behalf of current and future generations. Governments are accountable to their people and ensure their participation in governance. Well-being forms a new social contract and provides a compass for public policy, including budgetary and regulatory decisions, to achieve better outcomes for individuals, communities and society. Governance at all levels, from local to global, is committed to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, pursuing multi-sectoral policies for health and a fair global distribution of health-enabling resources. Elimination of all forms of structural discrimination and injustice, including marginalization, which impact people in multiple ways, is essential for ensuring the right to health for all. Partnerships with a vibrant civil society are nourished to strengthen the social fabric and social solidarity locally and internationally.

4 ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

In a well-being society, universal health coverage is central to social protection for all and to societal stability. Funding priority is given to the development of primary care, health promotion and preventive services. Global health governance ensures equitable distribution of health-care assets. Mental well-being is accorded high priority in re-orienting health services. Health-care workers are nurtured and protected. Health financing is understood not as an expenditure but as an investment for well-being and societal resilience. Governance for health builds on co-design and makes full use of the digital transformation to achieve equitable benefits across populations, ensuring access and meaningful participation to avoid digital exclusion. This includes a high priority assigned to develop people's health literacy throughout the life-course. Investment in the next generation, especially early child development and education, lays the foundation for healthy, active, connected lives.

5 ADDRESS THE IMPACTS OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Digital transformation and technological change can create new opportunities for connection, health literacy and knowledge-sharing and more effective, efficient service provision. Some features of digital systems and digital exclusion can, however, create isolation and exacerbate inequity. Furthermore, health and well-being may be jeopardized by the increased time spent on digital activities and in virtual settings, from information overload, hate and bullying, the propagation of misinformation to marketing of unhealthy products and behaviour. A well-being society assesses and counteracts harm and disempowerment, ensures equitable access and harnesses the potential of technology for human beings and the planet to flourish.

STEWARDING A FLOURISHING FUTURE

Well-being is a political choice. It is the outcome of the policies, institutions, economies and ecosystems in which people live. Well-being requires a whole-of-society approach involving action across all levels, stakeholders and sectors, from communities and within organizations to regional and national government. The role of health promotion is to catalyse and support this movement by:

- Ensuring that people and communities are enabled to take control of their health and lead fulfilling lives with a sense of meaning and purpose, in harmony with nature, through education, culturally relevant health literacy, meaningful empowerment and engagement.
- Enabling, mediating and advocating for a unifying approach to creating well-being societies by shaping the determinants of health in all settings.
- Ensuring that promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health and social services are of high quality, affordable, accessible and acceptable and are provided according to needs, especially for those often left behind.



These actions should be supported around the world by sustained investment in health-care workers, health promotion, public health infrastructure and research. The global development landscape will change if the well-being of both people and the planet becomes central to the definition of success. In a well-being society, success is measured according to a set of values that is different from those that are dominant today and takes a long-term view. It goes beyond measures of economic activity to indicators of all the determinants of human and planetary well-being, including health in all its dimensions, health equity and the resources that will shape and safeguard the well-being of present and future generations. For people, this means that everyone enjoys a long, healthy life, lived well.

The way forward is to transition to more sustainable, equitable societies and to learn from countries, regions, cities, communities and cultures – especially indigenous cultures – how to create more sustainable, equitable societies. WHO will support this transition by bringing all actors together to realize the vision of well-being societies, collect evidence and technically support its Member States and partners in the implementation of this Charter. Health and well-being depend on the actions of everyone in society. This Charter calls upon nongovernmental and civic organizations, academia, business, governments, international organizations and all concerned to engage in partnerships for decisive implementation of strategies for health and well-being. Together this will drive the transformation towards well-being societies in all countries, leaving no one behind.

Note: The Geneva Charter was developed before and during the 10th Global Conference on Health Promotion. Over 5000 experts from 149 countries participated virtually, including Heads of Government, ministers from different sectors, including health, finance, social affairs and education; cultural and religious leaders, other politicians, senior public servants, health practitioners, policy-makers, researchers, teachers and community representatives. The Charter is complemented by a series of technical papers.



**World Health
Organization**



**10th Global Conference
on Health Promotion**