



Health Reporting Training Project

Final Report

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Executive Summary

Health Reporting Training Project (HeaRT), a two-year initiative that developed vocational training tools on health reporting, targeted journalists, in particular journalists who report on health issues, as well as journalism and media students. Furthermore, it targeted media outlets, journalism organizations and associations, educational institutions, as well as health organizations and policy makers on a national and European level.

The general objective of HeaRT was to develop high quality innovative vocational training tools on health reporting, aiming to contribute to the enhancement of health reporting training in the EU. More specifically, it aimed to make information on existing training opportunities on health reporting available and easily accessible to journalists, media and academic institutions. In addition, it intended to provide knowledge and understanding of the situation of health journalism, in an effort to raise attention to the issue and better understand journalists' needs in terms of training and health reporting. Given the limited educational opportunities available, HeaRT aimed to develop training tools on health reporting, so as to offer specialized knowledge and skills to journalists, as well as provide useful tools to media organizations and academic/training institutions. Finally, it aimed to widely disseminate the acquired knowledge and developed training tools to further promote their exploitation.

Universities, scientific institutions, journalists' associations and NGOs worked together during the past two years on this project. Initiated by the Athens-based Institute of Preventive Medicine, Environmental and Occupational Health, Prolepsis, HeaRT brought together a combination of expertise and skills from Germany, Portugal, Romania, Great Britain, Finland, Estonia and Spain. This geographically diverse consortium was a multi-disciplinary group with partners offering specialized knowledge and experience from the fields of health and journalism, as well as media training and education. The project's methodology included EU-wide research to identify existing training courses on health reporting, as well as literature review and a survey conducted among journalists to further explore the issues and needs related to health journalism. Based on the research outcomes, a training methodology was designed that led to the development of training modules. Partners conducted train-the-trainers activities and adapted selected modules to be offered as both face-to-face workshops and electronic tools in all partner countries in their language. Throughout the project dissemination activities took place and evaluation tools assessed processes and outcomes. As a result, the HeaRT website offers an electronic user-friendly platform with links and useful information on all available educational courses on health journalism. Furthermore, in total 176 journalists from seven EU countries participated in the survey that provided interesting knowledge on health journalism. Training methodology, curriculum and educational materials on 11 courses were developed combining expertise from both health and journalism. These modules were delivered to journalists and students of journalism in the form of workshops that took place in Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Romania and the United Kingdom and in the form of an e-learning tool available on the project's website. More than 250 journalists, students and interested partners participated to the workshops or used the e-learning tool. The HeaRT project was presented to a network of individuals and institutions with an interest in health journalism in the EU and internationally during the EU HeaRT conference in Athens. The conference, attended by more than 110 participants from 12 countries, helped to raise awareness on the issue of health journalism.

The HeaRT website will be available for at least two more years offering the project's outputs. The possibility of repeating the training workshops has been discussed in some of the participating countries, as well as incorporating the training courses in a university program. Furthermore, the consortium is investigating the possibility of working on new project proposals for the continuation and exploitation of HeaRT.

HeaRT website: www.project-heart.eu.

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1. Project Objectives

General Goal

The general goal of HearT is to develop high quality vocational training tools that offer specialized knowledge and skills on covering health related issues to journalists and students, so as to contribute to the advancement of training in health reporting, and thus improve the quality of health reporting in the European Union (EU).

Specific Objectives

Media can play a key role when it comes to health, by informing the general public, the scientific community as well as policy makers about issues related to health, maintaining important issues on the public agenda and promoting health literacy. At the same time, however, training opportunities on health reporting are limited and journalists appear to lack specialized training, while health issues are often difficult to comprehend or interpret for the general public.

The HearT project, in an effort to further explore the need for specialized health training and most importantly provide tools to cover this need, aimed to:

- Identify existing training opportunities on health reporting around Europe and make this information available and easily accessible as a valuable resource for journalists and interested parties. This analysis also helped depict the current situation of health reporting training in Europe and reveal gaps and needs.
- Explore existing knowledge regarding health journalism and health journalism training in the EU, as well as research to better understand journalists' needs in terms of training on health reporting.
- Develop, pilot test and evaluate a new training methodology and training tools on effectively covering health related issues in the media.
- Build an informative website to serve as an EU health journalism platform and a valuable resource for health reporters.
- Promote the acquired knowledge and encourage further exploitation of the HearT training tools by widely disseminating the project and its outputs across the EU.

Target Groups

This project primarily targets and benefits health reporters and journalists who cover stories related to health, as well as students of journalism and media or communications who have an interest in health reporting. Furthermore, it can benefit media and journalism organizations and associations, as well as educational institutions offering journalism and communication studies. In addition to these groups, health organizations and networks, policy makers and, in particular, ministries of health, media and education across EU are among the target-groups regularly informed about the project during its lifetime.

Getting the Target Groups Involved

Informing these target groups about the HearT project and raising awareness on the project and the issue of health journalism was a first step and a continuous effort throughout the project as was part of the effort of getting the target groups involved. In order to achieve this, databases (lists of contacts) of these groups in each of the HearT partner-countries were created/ used to disseminate information on the project's different activities and results. More specifically, in an attempt to involve the project's target group as early as possible, a press release informing on the project and inviting journalists to get involved was sent to the media in all the participating countries, as well as a newsletter that was sent a few months later. Four more press releases and two more newsletters followed during the two years of the

project's life-time, ensuring that information about the different stages of the project was disseminated. In addition, HeaRT actively participated as one of the organizations sponsoring a European Conference on Health Journalism that took place in the United Kingdom in June 2011, during which the project was presented to members of its target group across the EU. In September 2012, HeaRT organized a European Conference to present the results of the project and exchange ideas on health journalism. Around 110 participants, including health journalists, experts, academics and policy makers from 12 countries in Europe attended the meeting which was held in the Acropolis Museum in Athens, Greece. National info days in the United Kingdom, Romania, Estonia, Germany and Finland also took place and attended by more than 200 people. HeaRT's target groups were invited and had the opportunity to actively participate in these events, allowing them to discuss about the project and different aspects of health reporting, further disseminate and help the exploitation of HeaRT results. The project's target groups were also involved throughout the core activities of HeaRT. In particular, media and journalism professionals, organizations and associations, academic and training institutions, ministries of health and communications were contacted to contribute to the identification of training courses around Europe. Moreover, journalists and editors themselves were invited to participate in a survey on health journalism conducted in Greece, the United Kingdom, Finland, Romania, Estonia and Spain. Approximately 176 journalists participated in the survey and, hence, offered valuable insight on their needs and perceptions regarding health reporting training. This knowledge contributed to the development of the project's training methodology, based on which the training tools were constructed. Following that, training workshops were conducted and attended by around 250 journalists and students, who were also invited to use the e-learning tools provided through HeaRT consortium. As mentioned above, journalists and students, associations and organizations, as well as academics and policy makers were also actively involved in the major dissemination activities of the project, which were the final European conference and the national info days. The target group's involvement was also vital for the evaluation of the project and its results.

Benefits and Potential Impact

Among the project's potential major benefits to its target group are raising awareness and providing resources and knowledge on the issue of health journalism, as well as covering a need for specialized training by offering innovative training tools to journalists and academic institutions. More specifically, research that was conducted by the HeaRT consortium during the first year of its implementation confirmed and revealed the lack of training opportunities in the EU, as well as the limited information in the literature concerning this issue. In addition, it is indicative, that according to the survey conducted, more than 7 out of 10 journalists had not received any specialized training on reporting health issues, while around half of the journalists who participated in the survey considered specialized training as necessary or, if not necessary, good to have. HeaRT project aimed to enhance understanding and available information on health journalism and offer much needed specialized knowledge, skills and qualifications to journalists on issues journalists themselves have identified as most crucial regarding health coverage. Evaluation of HeaRT's training activities indicated that the training program succeeded in providing professional journalists and journalism students with specialized skills and knowledge that were considered important for reporting issues relating to health. Evidence demonstrated that the educational workshops were well received both organization and content wise. At the same time, the training program's evaluation has offered useful feedback that can improve the quality of this educational initiative, which could be repeated in occupational or other academic settings. The project's final products can thus be useful resources not only for journalists and media organizations, but for academic and training institutions offering journalism studies across Europe as well. Furthermore, by developing and providing evidence-based training tools to journalists, HeaRT can also have a positive impact on enhancing journalistic standards and employability in the EU, as well as improving health information disseminated by the media.

2. Project Approach

In brief, the methods used by the HeaRT project included research on an EU level to identify existing courses on health reporting, literature review to explore current knowledge on health journalism and a survey among journalists to investigate their needs and beliefs. Based on the results of the above, a training methodology was developed, which led to the development and application of the training tools in both face-to-face and web format for 11 topics related to health reporting. Throughout the project evaluation and dissemination methods were applied. More specifically:

- **Identification of existing training opportunities on health reporting around Europe – exploring the current situation and needs**

The HeaRT consortium under the leadership of the University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf (FHD) researched and collected information on existing courses, programs, training schemes and other forms of formal, in-formal and non-formal training for health reporting in all EU member states, Iceland and the US.

The aim of this investigation was to provide a European-wide comprehensive overview of available health journalism courses and to prepare the groundwork for subsequent activities, ensuring that gaps have been identified. The methodology applied was the following:

- Agreement on the objectives and parameters of the research and allocation of countries among partners.
- Record of available health journalism educational and training opportunities including courses and degrees at all levels (undergraduate, post graduate and continuing education), formal and informal seminars, workshops and conferences. Report of any “crash courses” or “quick information courses” at local, regional or national level.
- Identification of the target groups for such courses (doctors and medical professionals, health management professionals, PR and marketing staff).
- Collection of information and any learning tools from these courses that might be of value for the HeaRT project. Identification of the methodologies employed by training and educational courses, including the validation criteria used.
- Analysis of needs and gaps and development of a discussion document/report.
- Development of an online database to make the information available and easy to access. The HeaRT online database was constructed as a user-friendly resource which allows the user to search for courses using numerous filters, such as country, type of training, etc.

Throughout their work partners used a specially designed research grid that took into consideration all possible aspects of users, needs of learners, initial training programs, continuing vocational training programs and interdisciplinary training schemes. This was used to enter data on identified courses according to predetermined criteria in a consistent and standardized manner.

In addition, space was allowed to include flyers, printed information on courses and other relevant details. This approach proved to be an added value for the HeaRT project, since it allowed partners to respond to the latest trends and potential future developments in the field of health reporting, innovative forms of learning and training, as well as validation of skills and competences in the field of health reporting. In Finland an electronic questionnaire developed by a team member and first tested among a test group was used to collect information. For entry of information into the HeaRT online database, a second grid was developed which listed research information according to specific categories.

- **Literature review on health journalism situation and training in the EU**

A comprehensive literature review was conducted by experienced researchers among all partners following the standard procedure for conducting scientific literature review, so as to present a comprehensive overview of the situation concerning health journalism and training in the EU.

The University of Minho from Portugal (UMinho) and the Institute of Preventive Medicine, Environmental and Occupational Health from Greece (Prolepsis) coordinated this work. Each partner was allocated with specific countries (including its own) to review, so as to ensure that the situation across Europe would be thoroughly recorded. Guidelines for conducting the bibliographic analysis were provided to partners, in order to ensure quality and uniformity of results. The issues reviewed included the following: needs and limitations of health reporting; mostly/ under-reported health issues; sources; frequency of health stories; effect of health reporting on attitudes and decision making concerning health; health journalism education; qualification criteria for health journalists. More specifically, the following research methodology was followed:

(1) A systematic search for key words related to health journalism and reporting, journalistic training, health news and the issues listed earlier in scientific journals, conference papers and proceedings, academic press, books and grey literature as well as in all possible databases (general or specialized), library catalogues and in some cases telephone interviews with journalists and health professionals;

(2) A list of the identified references; bibliographic references were organized according to the type of reference: Books & Book Chapters; Scientific Journals; Thesis (PhD; Master's; Bachelor's; High School);

(3) Country specific literature review reports that were compiled to a comprehensive state-of-the-art report document.

As added value UMinho's researcher wrote an article in a professional magazine about the HearT project. This enhanced the project information diffusion.

- **Journalists' survey on needs and beliefs**

Original research, a participatory approach, among 176 journalists from seven countries also took place aiming to assess journalists' education, experience, skills, perceptions, barriers and needs concerning health reporting. The questionnaire used was adapted by the Survey of Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ) Members, 2009, conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the AHCJ, after ensuring the necessary permission. The HearT questionnaire consisted of 24 mostly closed questions, so as to facilitate the process of analysis.

An interview guide was designed as a tool to facilitate the questionnaire completion process and to ensure that similar procedures were followed. The guide included a description of the questionnaire, with particular emphasis on each of the five thematic units, general guidelines regarding the methodology, as well as tips and guidelines for the process of completion and for overcoming possible limitations and difficulties.

Guidelines for partners specified that health journalists and generalists, including both senior and younger journalists, who report or are interested in reporting on health issues from different types of media (e.g. print, broadcast, web media) would be approached and asked to complete the questionnaire. Partners translated the questionnaire in their own language and aimed at a sample of around 20-30 journalists from different media. Two options were offered regarding the method of questionnaire completion: self-administered (suggested) and structured interviews. Partners circulated the questionnaire mainly by email to lists of local, regional and national journalists and in some cases through associations' databases and websites. An easy to complete database was developed as an excel file used by all partners to enter the collected data of the questionnaires. Clear coding instructions were also prepared and provided to all partners, so as to ensure the quality and uniformity of the data coding. Analysis of the questions on basis of the total sample, as well as on country-specific

basis, under a comparative view, was performed. Survey results accompanied by tables and figures were included in a comprehensive report with an Appendix with the descriptive comprehensive analysis of all results.

The questionnaire attracted quite a lot of attention, and paved the way for the press release sent out to journalists, media organizations and associations revealing some of its key findings for Europe. The added value of this survey includes the adapted questionnaire, which could be used in other EU countries as well, and most importantly the General Features and Conclusions produced that acted as a useful resource for HearRT, but can be further exploited by researchers, academics and other interesting parties. Furthermore, based on the results of the survey, a scientific paper has been produced as well as an abstract submitted to the 2013 World Journalism Education Congress.

- **Design of training methodology**

The above-described findings contributed significantly to the drafting of the training methodology, an activity coordinated by Coventry University. The aim was for HearRT to offer genuinely new training tools, useful and in line as far as possible with issues identified by journalists within each partner country. Results from the journalists' survey offered specific guidelines on the content (interest in issues, need for skill development), as well as the organization of the workshops (duration, format of training).

The methodology included an overview of the survey data, highlighting common areas and differences, and examined each of the potential topics and skills (in the overall order of preference, noting variations where appropriate). It made use of resources already existing and suggested a framework of approach that allowed those leading the training package to develop a critical understanding and offer resources that would stimulate new thinking in journalists accessing the training package. It therefore offered initial, general guidelines on the curriculum, materials, links and references. The issue of faculty, selection criteria and admin/technical support would be addressed in each partner country. An e-learning tool plan was also incorporated in the methodology.

The general outline of the Methodology was discussed and agreed among partners during a meeting dedicated to that purpose.

- **Development and application of the educational tools**

Based on the training methodology, the HearRT consortium coordinated by Prolepsis Institute developed educational tools to be applied in the form of workshops and e-learning tools.

More specifically, the work conducted by HearRT indicated that the "one size fits all" approach appeared not to be suitable. Thus, rather than mapping out a single 4-day training package based on a Europe-wide template and ideas that may have received little support, a combination of topics that aroused the greatest interest and combination of skills were applied to each country in the format that appeared to be preferred by the target group. The steps followed included:

- (1) Allocation of topics to be developed as modules by each partner based on its expertise.
- (2) Use of a module template with specific instructions of the content that modules needed to contain, as well as the organizational details.
- (3) Development of modules and organization of a meeting where train-the-trainers activities took place among partners.
- (4) Selection of modules to be translated and applied in each participating country, based on the results of the journalists' survey.
- (5) Organization of workshops in Greece, Estonia, Romania, United Kingdom, Finland and Germany, based on the preferences expressed by journalists. Partners invited journalists and students of journalism in their countries to participate (the aim was to

have at least 30 participants). Workshops included both theoretical and practical parts, encouraging active participation. Participants were provided with hard-copy and electronic material. All seminars were evaluated.

- (6) An e-learning tool was designed and discussed among partners before it was finalized.
- (7) Translated modules, presentations, videos from the workshops and resources were uploaded on the e-learning tool, which provides information on six different languages. The e-learning tool is user friendly providing to the user the opportunity to navigate different modules and resources, allowing the further exploitation of the developed training materials.
- (8) Partners invited journalists and students to use and evaluate the e-learning tool.

The publicly-available material which is supplemented wherever necessary by additional material in appropriate languages, (with appropriate prior agreement and credit) or links to publicly sourced material and appropriate source material can form the basis of an internet e-learning platform for health journalism. This would remain and could continue to be developed as a legacy and an added value of the project.

In addition, the HearT consortium has agreed to work on a textbook of health journalism based on the work conducted by the project.

- **Evaluation strategy**

Throughout the project a thorough evaluation strategy, designed and managed by the Center of Independent Journalism (CIJ), was applied. HearT methods and approaches were evaluated based on specific indicators with purpose-made evaluation tools of both the process and the outputs. The following evaluation activities were conducted

- *Six-month evaluations over the two year duration of the projects* assessing: partners' satisfaction in terms of workload, deadlines, cooperation with partners.
- *Evaluation of five staff meetings* assessing: content and presentations, expectations and outcomes, duration and time allocation, organization (venue, meals, accommodation, etc.) and suggestions for improvements.
- *Evaluation of HearT major activities*: Identification of existing training opportunities on health reporting around Europe; Literature review on the situation of health journalism and training in the EU; Journalists' survey; Training methodology; Development and application of the educational tools (evaluation of workshops and 2-month follow up evaluation, as well as evaluation of the e-learning tool). Activities were assessed both in terms of process and output.
- *Evaluation of the European Conference on health journalism and the National info days* assessing: quality of presentations, information and materials, professional value for participants' work, networking opportunities, overall satisfaction with meetings and their organization.

The evaluation approach and methods, as well as results are thoroughly described in HearT Evaluation report.

In particular, the evaluation of the workshops indicated that the overall satisfaction of participants was high. In particular, the rate of respondents who stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied was: 82.9% for the content – topics of the workshop, 80.2% for the quality of the course materials, 67.3% for the quality of the practical activities and 74.1% for the teaching methods. Concerning organizational issues of the workshop the rates of respondents who stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied were: 90.5% for the quality of the overall organization, 89.6% for the invitation and registration process and 80.8% for the overall time allocation to sessions. Finally, when asked about the usefulness of the knowledge acquired for their professional life, 78.8% of the respondents stated that they

gained relevant knowledge and information from this workshop. These results have been submitted as an abstract to the 2013 World Journalism Education Congress. Furthermore, they have offered useful insights and suggestions for the improvement and enhancement of the quality of the HeaRT training program that could benefit professionals, researchers and academics interested in health journalism.

- **Dissemination and exploitation strategy**

A dissemination plan discussed and finalized among partners was applied throughout the project. Members of the HeaRT consortium collected or used the contact details of stakeholders including all relevant organizations in their country to build a database for dissemination purposes. These dissemination lists, containing approximately more than 6.000 contacts were used to circulate at least five press releases in all participating countries and three newsletters, which described the progress and achievements of the project, as well as invitations and information on the country specific workshops, the EU conference and all national events.

The dedicated website “www.project-heart.eu” was launched early in the beginning of the project to ensure that information and all products and results of HeaRT are easily available and accessible. The website contains among others the e-learning tool, available in six languages.

One of the milestones of the HeaRT dissemination strategy was the European Conference that was organized in Athens, Greece in October 15, 2012. Around 110 health journalists from 12 countries in Europe attended the Conference. Among the presenters and chairs were representatives from the European Commission and academics. Participants warmly welcomed proposals to incorporate in curriculums of accredited and other journalism courses at universities and colleges basic skills and knowledge of health reporting. Additional papers and contributions from leading health journalists in the USA, Ireland, Netherlands, Italy, Greece, Romania, UK and Portugal followed the opening introductions which outlined the work of the six partner organisations in the HeaRT project. The conference was considered a success that also raised the question of how to build on the work that has already been accomplished. The HeaRT project team has agreed to investigate ways of continuing the project, hopefully widening its reach to new countries, adding new training materials, and developing the first-ever book on health journalism in Europe, to be published next summer. The conference generated media coverage, including interviews and articles, and was also communicated through twitter.

The project was concluded with National info days in all participating countries. More specifically, one-day informational events took place in London and Coventry, UK, in Bucharest, Romania, in Tallinn, Estonia and in Dusseldorf, Germany. In Helsinki, HeaRT was represented during "Occupational Health and Safety Seminar" organized by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH) and attended by 600 participants.

Events were attended by health journalists, representatives of state authorities (e.g. National Public Health Institute), representatives of NGOs, health professionals, etc. During the meetings, the project's results were presented, informational material was disseminated and the website and e-learning tool were promoted. The presentations were followed by vivid debates and participants appreciated the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences and expressed their high interest in future similar debates. The events generated media coverage in some countries and details were communicated to several thousand people through Twitter and Facebook.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

In a glance, as part of the HeaRT project, in each partner country (Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Romania and United Kingdom) research and surveys among health journalists helped to determine what training facilities and resources already exist and what needs journalists have, and hence design a series of training events which were offered to health journalists, educators and students. Basic course materials have been translated into each partner country's language, and posted online in an e-learning tool to allow interested journalists to register, log in free of charge and access the information that interests them: <http://www.project-heart.eu/index.php/projectheart/tools/elearning>. More specifically:

Objective 1: Identify existing training opportunities on health reporting around Europe and make this information easily accessible as a valuable resource.

Outcomes & Results: The HeaRT group researched and produced a list of 78 courses related to health journalism in the EU with useful information and accompanying materials, such as flyers, links and contact details of courses. The complete list is available on the project's website in (a) a comprehensive report (<http://www.project-heart.eu/index.php/projectheart/project/reports>) that also includes a quantitative and qualitative analysis of courses found, and (b) an online data base available ("EU Course Database": <http://www.project-heart.eu/index.php/projectheart/datamainviewpost>). The database can be easily searched using filters (EU country, Type of training, Institution, Degree, Intended users) to help the user browse through the courses easily. Apart from information related to these filters, for each course and where available, a brief description, duration, languages, pre-requirements, degrees/certifications, curriculum, downloads and link to its website are provided. A valuable finding was that only a very small number of training seminars, courses and programs focusing on health reporting or coverage of health issues in the media were available in Europe. It was very difficult to find relevant courses, as well as receive updated information on courses identified. Nevertheless, this work helped the HeaRT team to depict the availability and characteristics of training on health reporting. Furthermore, it produced a useful tool for journalists or students looking for such training, as well as researchers or academics that work on the field. Until December 2012, the online database had 704 views, of which 326 were unique.

Objective 2: Explore the literature on the situation of health journalism in the EU and better understand journalists' needs in terms of training on health reporting.

Outcomes & Results: Information on health journalism for numerous EU countries was researched and analyzed to compile a literature report which is available from the HeaRT website (<http://www.project-heart.eu/index.php/projectheart/project/reports>). The report includes the methodology followed, a synopsis of the main literature review findings, as well as a list of bibliographic references. It offers information related to health journalism scientific studies; health journalism practices, education and influence to the society, as well as needs and limitations. The following findings were of importance: (1) absence of or limited published information and research related to health journalism in some countries; (2) relevant differences between the state of health journalism practice and education among European countries, as well as common points, such as the issue of conflict of interest, the need for training and the need for better communication and collaboration between journalism and the medical communities. The second major achievement is the questionnaire (adapted from a US model) and the survey conducted among journalists (available in the Survey Report at <http://www.project-heart.eu/index.php/projectheart/project/reports>). Valuable information is provided on both a country-specific and a comparative basis, based on the analysis of 176 completed questionnaires from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Romania, Spain, and the UK. The survey showed that only a small proportion of journalists, that are specifically health reporters or editors, have received special training on health reporting. Significant variations

exist between countries on the ideal duration of any training event, and in the mix of topics and skills that journalists were most interested to learn more about were identified, although there also was a surprising degree of consensus over which methods of teaching and learning were preferred over others. This study enables the health reporting community and academics to understand current needs for specialized training and assist to develop efficient training programs and educational material oriented to the specific needs of each group of journalists.

The above described activities succeeded in gathering existing knowledge and the target groups' views for the development of tailored made training packages that would best fit the needs and preferences of journalists in Europe. They also resulted in the identification of additional health journalists and contributed in the networking efforts in each country.

Objective: Develop, pilot test and evaluate new training tools on health reporting, by conducting workshops in the participating European countries and providing e-learning tools and resources.

Outcomes & Results: Based on the knowledge acquired by the above described work the HeaRT team designed the training methodology that guided the development of the training tools. Eleven training modules were developed on the following topics: "Medical research and science", "The business/ economics of health care", "Health care quality and performance", "Health policy", "Global health", "Consumer/ Lifestyle health", "The politics of health care", "Health disparities", "How to understand statistics", "How to evaluate conflicts of interest" and "The Workings of publicly financed health care".

Training workshops were organized in six European countries, Germany, Greece, Estonia, Romania, Finland and United Kingdom in the country respective languages. The workshops, were attended by a total of 254 participants (around 65.7%, journalists, 32% journalism students and 2.3% healthcare professionals), included a selection of the above mentioned topics and had a duration of one to four days, in respect to each country's specific characteristics. A common assessment tool was used in all countries during the workshops and after a 2-month follow up period. The results demonstrated that the educational workshops were well received both organization and content wise. The training program's evaluation also is a useful resource for similar future educational initiatives. A number of the follow-up questionnaires indicate the way in which some of the training sessions have led to journalists developing their skills and applying the knowledge they learned. Indicatively, participants were able to apply the knowledge acquired and feel better prepared to work with medical reports or press releases.

The training modules including presentations, materials and further readings are available on the HeaRT website as an e-learning tool (<http://www.project-heart.eu/index.php/projectheart/tools/elearning>). The tool has been designed as a user-friendly platform where the user can select one out of six languages and have free access to the available training materials (text files, presentations and were available videos) and a glossary of health related terms. Until December 2012, more than 80 people had registered. An on-line evaluation tool assessed its usefulness and quality. Even though it was initially foreseen to have a forum with health communication experts and health care professionals, this was not realized. Although a forum was prepared, experts were identified and the option "You can submit your article at heart@prolepsis.gr and get an opinion from our experts!" was available through the e-learning tool, no articles were submitted.

The workshops organized by partners could be considered among the highlights of the project. They stirred a large interest among journalists and journalism students within the consortium countries, while the high participation and registration rates in some of the countries, such as Greece and Romania, stressed the need for specialized journalism training.

Objective: Build an informative web site to serve as an EU health journalism platform and a valuable resource for health reporters

Outcomes & Results: As demonstrated throughout this report, the HeaRT website has had a vital role in this project and has acted as a vehicle through which the project's products and actions are promoted and made available for the public at www.project-heart.eu. The website contains information on the project (target groups, aims and objectives, implementation steps and work packages, consortium), the main results and reports, the course database, the e-learning tool, HeaRT news, a calendar and the newsletters. Until December 2012, the website has had 15.660 views, 5.811 visitors, of which 3.949 unique.

Objective: Widely disseminate the developed tools across the EU, including the organization of a European conference on health reporting and national info-days in the participating countries

Outcomes & Results: Dissemination lists were constructed or used by all partners to communicate information on the project to a total of 6.200 contacts. Five press releases, media announcements and invitations, three newsletters, the website, conference participations and communication with the target groups throughout the two years of implementation have contributed to raising awareness about the project and preparing a network through which the training tools were widely disseminated and promoted. It is worth noting, that this network consists of contacts from countries outside the consortium, such as Italy and Ireland, as well as the US. The HeaRT project was also included in databases, such as ENTER and ADAM. Over the lifetime of the project, the group managed to get coverage in the media in the different countries (more than 40 media clips and 5 interviews), such as the UK journalism trade press, the Medical Journalists Association, the NUJ, the Association of Journalism Educators and national TV stations in Greece. Material from HeaRT promoted on www.europeanhealthjournalism.com has attracted interest from Europe, Africa and India.

The Coventry conference organized in June 2011 as part of the promotion of the project helped to reach out to additional EU countries that were not partners such as Ireland, Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Denmark, including several people who then attended the European Athens conference. The concluding European Conference in October 2012 was attended by around 110 participants from 12 European countries and the USA, while registered participants were more than 140. National info days in all participating countries significantly contributed to the wider dissemination and exploitation of the project's results and products on a national level and were attended by more than 200 people.

As a result of these efforts, the work of the project has been widely promoted and is recognized by many health journalists even if they have not attended training or involved themselves in the project. For instance, the UK HeaRT events were attended by journalists from the British Medical Journal, while the Medical Journalists Association and the National Union of Journalists supported the project by circulating information about the training courses.

The workshops themselves reached a significant group of working journalists who otherwise would have lacked any wider perspective on their work, while in some cases, such as Greece, the faculty of the workshops included some of the most prominent health journalists of national media of the country, who enthusiastically supported the project and its aims.

One problem the project faced was that most health journalists are successfully doing their jobs from the standpoint of their editors and employers without any specific training or qualification in health journalism, and unwilling to take unpaid time out to improve their knowledge and skills.

The ground work laid by this project has raised the profile of the issue and established a much more credible base on which to press for more participation and possibly even workplace-level education.

4. Partnerships

The HearT project was implemented by a multi-country partnership consisting of six organizations from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Romania and United Kingdom. Over the course of the project two more organizations from Portugal and Spain participated in some of the activities, but were obliged to withdraw for organizational reasons. All partners offered specialized know-how and expertise from the fields of journalism, medicine, media training and education, journalists' associations, NGOs and international networks of media stakeholders, in an effort to enhance much needed collaboration between the medical community and the media. The aim was to build a strong interdisciplinary, multi-country consortium, where each member can bring in different knowledge and expertise, as well as the perspective of different EU countries. For several of the participating countries this was considered a much needed program, which would have hardly been possible without a European consortium and a European partnership. Geographically diverse areas of the EU were represented, so as to achieve a comprehensive EU wide understanding and knowledge of the issue concerning Health Journalism. During the research activities HearT was also able to identify courses on health journalism as well as review the literature, where this was possible, across Europe and not only among the consortium countries.

As expressed by all partners, the experience of working in a European partnership has been very positive, enriching, educational and productive. One of the strong points was the interdisciplinary collaboration among medical and public health specialists and experts, journalists, communicators and journalism professionals, etc. Because of the exchange of knowledge, experiences, practices and even personal contacts, this collaboration was valuable for each individual partner. This European partnership was also useful in regards to interesting new contacts and information gained by the organizations involved, as well as contributing to the development of an EU wide network of relevant organizations. Networking among European sister institutes and health journalism operators was also considered extremely fruitful and useful. It was also interesting to learn, how different the levels of knowledge and needs are among health journalists in different parts of Europe. The discussions and analyses between different countries especially when developing training modules were a learning experience. The European partnership was an eye-opener to the need to further develop health journalism in Europe. The involvement of partner countries with differently organized health care systems and cultural assumptions on health care was a useful reminder of the need to tailor courses to the specific needs and situation of each country. The extra dimension of a European project was a selling point for journalists, especially given the very different context of European health care systems. But it has also permitted an analysis of the extent to which some issues in health reporting involve general principles. This is reflected in the methodology document and the training material development that clearly demonstrates that each country would have to fill in the relevant local details.

In general, the group worked well together throughout the different activities of the HearT project and all organizations involved gained something in the process. Communication during transnational partner meetings was very good. As soon as the need for more frequent communication was detected, phone conferences were regularly scheduled approximately every 1-2 months, to facilitate collaboration. Bilateral exchange of information via email worked very well too. The special quality of the HearT consortium of partners was also evident when a partner experienced severe health problems and had to re-schedule some of his project activities. Even at that time all partners were very cooperative and collaboration continued very well. Nevertheless, there were times that the experience of working together was also difficult because of the size and the cultural disparities of the group. In addition, it was sometimes challenging to get representatives from different fields and expertise, various languages and countries to a same understanding about research methods and various

issues. Some miscommunication issues with some partners also occurred that led to delays and difficulties in the work conducted and meeting the deadlines.

The opening up of the project to journalistic networks in the US, the attendance and active participation in international conferences, such as the European Conference “Health in the Headlines” that took place in Coventry in the UK and the European Conference on Health Journalism in Athens, the close interaction between academia, media practitioners, health experts and experienced project managers has been of very high value for the project. Through the conferences the project was made known and gained support by countries outside of the consortium, such as Italy, Ireland, Cyprus and the Netherlands, opening the way for new similar initiatives or further development of the specific project. Several partners have been able to strengthen or establish contacts with journalistic networks, unions, public and private media, publishing houses, newspapers and independent writers. All these institutions and individuals, who also were the target groups of the project, provided tremendous input during each phase of the project.

The benefits and the added value of this collaboration on a national and European level are evident through the experiences of each partner country. Any further development of the project could usefully work on further widening the range of partner countries to include, for example Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, another Scandinavian country, and, if at all possible, France. **Prolepsis Institute in Greece** managed to establish contacts with individual health journalists, owners/directors of media organizations, members of journalists’ associations, the National Kapodistrian University, Department of Media and Communication and the Medical School of Athens, as well as health journalists, institutes and associations on a European level, such as the London School of Economics and the Association of British Science Writers. In addition, the European Conference offered the opportunity to create a network of interested professionals in 11 European countries and the US. Within Düsseldorf University and the State of Nordrhein-Westfalen, key stakeholders were included in the project that can support a future sustainable use of project products and their integration into mainstream journalistic training **in Germany** in the field of health reporting. Coventry **University in the UK** through the organization of the first-ever Europe-wide conference on health journalism had the opportunity to build on the partnership, drawing in journalists from 14 different countries, including a powerful delegation from the American Health Care Journalists - AHCJ (US). The work on HeaRT project opened up possibilities of ongoing partnerships and joint work with the AHCJ, with the Medical Journalists Association in Britain and the National Union of Journalists, as well as a visit to Romania to participate in the first health journalism summer school and invitations to develop more contacts with the organizers there. Furthermore, it resulted in opening and enhancing the dialogue with academics and a number of editors and other senior health journalists who have been interested in the project and its possibilities. The **Center of Independent Journalism in Romania** enhanced their international expertise and obtained more first-hand knowledge of the media community and its needs at a national level. They were also able to broaden their contacts and established links with organizations, such as journalism and communication schools or public authorities or medical professionals and organizations. The idea of establishing a type of permanent contact among the media and the medical professionals was one of the main conclusions of the Info Day in Bucharest as well. The **Finnish Institute of Occupational Health** established many new contacts with professional health journalists, their networks, groups and associations; as well as refreshed the existing ones. It was useful to build network relationships with health journalists to enhance mutual understanding and basis for future co-operation. In Estonia, a collaboration between two institutions, the Department of Public Health and the Department of Journalism in the **University of Tartu** was achieved, which was an added value of this project, beside the experience of working on a European partnership establishing contacts with journalists worldwide through the various dissemination events.

5. Plans for the Future

The work of the HeaRT project developed the basis and the know-how for a series of training modules now available online as an e-learning resource on the HeaRT website, which will be kept online for at least two more years. In each country HeaRT partners have been able to contact, work and build relationships with health journalists and those interested in health journalism.

With the aim to make a lasting contribution to the training of journalists, we have tried to provide resources to both those who want to improve their skills and those who can provide such training. The HeaRT project tried to raise awareness to the fact that health and health care are vital components of journalistic output and that news on health and health care is a vital part of public awareness and perception. Hence, activities and efforts have been made to raise awareness and provide the resources for some of the elements identified by the HeaRT project to be incorporated into mainstream courses or applied as training opportunities for professionals and students.

HeaRT partner institutes, universities and educational bodies now have resources and expertise they can offer. Through the project's activities, from research to training and dissemination, the word on the training resources that have been developed is being spread. In particular the European Conference, organized in Athens, Greece, in October 2012, presented the training tools and helped further disseminate the project's results to European and international professionals, academics and experts and contribute to the enhancement of the health journalism network promoted by HeaRT project, as well as the exploitation and sustainability of its products among the project's target groups. National Info Days that followed in each partner country allowed disseminating the results nationally and locally.

One of the ambitions for further work outlined at the Athens conference to considerable support was for a campaign to ensure that the basics of health journalism (which have been well encapsulated in the module material developed through the project) should be incorporated into the basic training of journalists, and not left as a "bolt-on" extra for those already working in journalism.

This has already begun in the UK, with Coventry University taking steps this year to integrate health reporting into its BA Journalism and Media course, and to press the Broadcast Journalism Training Council, which accredits the Coventry course, to build it into the NJTC's core curriculum. This would give a lasting legacy from the project, but also pose a longer-term task of training the trainers in Universities and colleges delivering accredited courses to teach health journalism.

In Greece, the departments of Journalism of two Universities expressed their interest in exploring ways of exploiting HeaRT products and incorporating them in their curriculum or as summer courses for their students. In addition, many journalists were keen in having the HeaRT workshop repeated and Prolepsis institute intends to seek funding. It should also be noted, that after the HeaRT workshops and the European Conference that took place in Athens, the University Research Institute of Applied Communication and the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens organized an event on "Health and the media during the crises". The event was organized by the President of the department, who actively participated in both HeaRT events as well. Professor Linos, Manager of Prolepsis, was among the invited speakers.

In Romania the Center for Independent Journalism (CIJ) intends to continue to advertise the e-learning platform as part of their overall presence in the media (e.g: the site and the platform were introduced to a group of journalism students at the Media and Communication Faculty / University of Bucharest). The course offered by the Center due to be launched in January 2012 will include health journalism courses. It is intended to teach the courses

included in the HearT Workshops, but also to develop other modules available on the e-learning platform that were applied in other countries. Furthermore, discussions have been initiated with other NGOs that expressed interest in health reporting, as the National Forum for Mental Health. CIJ also intends to contact journalism schools in Bucharest and the countryside and explore the possibility of introducing a health reporting course in their curricula. This issue was debated during the Info Day in Bucharest, when the introduction of such courses was suggested to be optional. The National Public Health Institute strongly encouraged CIJ to try to convince higher education institutions to include such training as part of the mandatory courses.

In Finland, there have already been requests to repeat the training in a tailor-made form to major health journalism players. This training will directly utilize the expertise and material developed in connection to the HearT project. In addition, HearT materials will be further used by the Finnish health journalists, while the established networks will be utilized by FIOH in future co-operation with the health journalists.

In Estonia, a major output of this project is a new curriculum on health journalism (e-learning) that is now offered in the department of journalism and public health in University of Tartu. In both pre- and post-graduate level joint training courses are carried out for journalism and public health students.

In Germany, some HearT project training modules will be used in mainstream training provision for journalists. The modules will be applied by the "ARD-ZDF Medienakademie" for the continuing training of public broadcasters, by the Hochschule der Media (Media University) in Stuttgart in seminars for students of journalism and media, SWR Public Radio, TV and Online for in-house training of young journalists and by the University in Greifswald-Stendal for their study programme on health journalism. Some HearT training modules will be continued to be adapted to special needs of journalistic trainees. This applies especially to the fields of online and multimedia journalism. Several health platforms asked the German partner to provide additional training modules in German language.

In addition to these national initiatives for exploitation of HearT, on a European level the Coventry Conference and the Athens EU conference have set the basis for a series of annual health journalism conferences in Europe. Discussions have already taken place about the next hosting countries of these meetings which help sustain and promote the network of health journalism. Another lasting legacy will be the first-ever book on health journalism in Europe, to be published in the summer of 2013, which will be based on the modules and e-learning materials developed by partners for the HearT project, together with papers from the Athens conference and from the Coventry conference in 2011. The proposal is for this to be an interactive e-book, to facilitate easy and low-cost dissemination. Furthermore, the HearT team has expressed interest in exploring new funding for the continuation and further exploitation of the project. Several possibilities will be explored, focusing on either transferring the knowledge acquired through the project in other European countries (which would mean adapting and translating the training modules and enriching the e-learning tool with more material in different languages) or working on expanding the topics of the training courses, to include important issues and priorities, such as mental health, occupational health or health for an ageing population. Several organizations have already been approached and would be interested in such initiatives. It should also be mentioned that abstracts related to the projects have been submitted to the 2013 World Journalism Education Congress which will be held in July in Belgium in an effort to further disseminate the project. The Presentation of the HearT project in such a conference would open the way in making the project known to professionals, academics and researchers on an international level. A scientific paper has also been prepared and will be submitted to the Journal of Health Communication, so as to ensure that the project is made known and results are available to the scientific community.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The HearT project produced clear evidence that health reporting training for journalists in Europe still is under-developed. There is a clear need for more advanced and more flexible forms of training in this very important field. Within the Bologna process of improvement of education and training in Europe, common standards for health reporting in Europe need to be developed. The HearT project went a first step towards transferable and applicable training modules which are flexible enough to be used for initial training of journalists as well as for continuing vocational training of professional journalists.

The HearT project contributed as well towards the Europe 2020 strategy to promote advanced social and integrative policies throughout Europe. The importance of public health, preventive health provision and health literacy in Europe defines a clear field of activity for the media in Europe. Media can accompany public policies towards better health and reduction of health risks in Europe. Sufficient training of journalists is needed in order to commonly achieve these goals of the Europe 2020 social initiative. The HearT project has prepared ground for a new form of health reporting training and shows pathways towards new and more advanced forms of training for journalists in the fields of health, health literacy and health-related lifestyle.

The project contributes to the objectives and priorities set by the Lifelong Learning Program, since it developed quality innovative lifelong learning that is attractive and at the same time accessible to its target group. Evaluation indicated that HearT succeeded in offering specialized knowledge and skills that could act as an asset to help journalists be more competitive in their field. Through its network, the target groups' active involvement throughout the project and the project's dissemination strategy, HearT promoted sustainability of its training products. Training tools are available for interested end users, and at the same time, they can act as models for the development of other innovative vocational training practices that take into consideration the labour market needs and fill in the gaps of specialized training. By offering vocational training that is tailored to their needs and interests in a specialized field, for which very few training programs exist and very limited scientific knowledge is known, HearT acts complimentary to EU policies in regards to employment and social affairs. It acts also complementary to the European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), through the research of existing information on available training and scientific knowledge on training, development of new training tools and provision of scientific and technical know-how in the field of health journalism. These benefited the project's primary target group directly, by training specialized health reporters. On the other hand, they helped the academic and scientific community by raising awareness about the gap and the need for vocational training, offering valuable knowledge and resources on better understanding the issue of health journalism, as well as providing new training resources. Exchange of ideas and expertise and further collaboration among medical and journalism experts and professionals were also promoted and facilitated throughout the project. HearT also contributed to the priority to improve the quality and increase the volume of cooperation between institutions, through its interdisciplinary and multi-country consortium, as well as the partnerships developed or strengthened beyond the consortium around EU, as described in detail in the previous section. The EU Conference became a platform for stakeholders from different fields related to health journalism and numerous countries to come together to exchange ideas and set the foundations for future collaborations. Concerning LLP Horizontal policies, the project promoted awareness of the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity within Europe, by taking into consideration the different needs among participating countries. Utilising the important findings from the research conducted by HearT, instead of applying a "one-size-fits-all" approach, custom made training packages for each country were developed and applied in different languages.

