

Title: Building Bridges to Resilience Project

Principal Investigators: Dr Mary Jo Lavelle and Dr Catherine-Anne Field

Funded by:

The project is financed by the International Health Grants Program of the Public Health Agency of Canada (arrangement #2324-HQ-000241) in partnership with IANPHI, University of Galway and Public Health Wales. It is administered on behalf of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Background

Public Health Emergencies (such as pandemics, natural disasters, and conflict crises) are increasing in frequency, severity, and complexity. Public Health Emergencies overwhelm health systems and disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. Traditionally centred on clinical and logistical responses, emergency management is increasingly shifting towards prevention, preparedness, and resilience. This highlights the growing importance of health promotion, which is an approach rooted in equity, participation, empowerment, and addressing the broader determinants of health.

Project

Led by academics at the Health Promotion Research Centre at the University of Galway and Public Health Wales, the *Building Bridges to Resilience Project* aims to identify international best practices in applying health promotion to emergency preparedness and response contexts. Investigating how countries integrate community-centred, equity-driven, and culturally responsive health promotion strategies across the Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) continuum, the project aims to identify important lessons gained for application in future crises. By identifying and sharing global best practices, the project supports more inclusive, sustainable, and community-driven emergency responses; aligning with the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (WHO, 1986) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (WHO, 2015–2030).

Methodology

Work-package 1 of the *Building Bridges to Resilience Project* is delivered and led by the University of Galway. This involved a scoping review of international literature that focused on published and grey literature examples of health promotion strategies applied or implemented to support emergency preparedness and responses. Work Package Two presents the conceptual framework developed to guide a targeted survey designed to capture real-world experiences, implementation strategies, and challenges in applying health promotion to emergency preparedness and response.

What the work is expected to establish

This project explores how health promotion principles (such as equity, participation, empowerment, and inter-sectoral collaboration) are applied in emergency preparedness and response (EP&R), as documented in grey literature (non-academic sources like government reports, NGO publications, and policy briefs). By synthesising peer-reviewed literature and grey literature through a health promotion lens, this project aims to highlight health promotion principles as under-recognised but impactful approaches to EP&R. The findings will support the integration of community-centred, equity-driven strategies in emergency contexts, promoting more resilient and inclusive health systems.