

On the Green Track

Climate and Health Competencies for Public Health

Tara Chen, Climate-Health Fellow¹

Twitter: @TaraTChen

LinkedIn/tara-chen

¹The Association of Public Health Schools in the European Region (ASPHER)

²Department of Family & Community Medicine, Sunnybrook Health sciences
Centre



The Association of Schools of Public Health
in the European Region

Our Role

ASPHER is the key independent European organisation dedicated to **strengthening the role of public health** by **improving education and training of public health professionals** for both **practice and research**.

What do we mean by competencies?

- Competencies represent combinations of individual attributes (such as knowledge, skills and personal or professional attitudes) individuals require to undertake the role they are expected to take on
- Public health competencies transcend the traditional boundaries of specific disciplines and enable public health professionals to deliver the essential public health operations (EPHOs) and apply the public health approach required of their role
- They serve as a framework in designing the curricula of a degree/CPD

What is the role of Public Health/Schools in Climate-Action?

- Climate/Environment events have evident impacts on human health & well-being
- Public health is essential in climate planning and policy action
- Public Health response includes: monitoring climate hazards, diagnosing health status, assessing vulnerability, mobilizing partnerships, mitigation, adaptation, workforce development, evaluation
- We have a responsibility to be a proactive partner



Article

Climate Action at Public Health Schools in the European Region

Rana Orhan ^{1,2,3,*} , John Middleton ³, Thomas Krafft ⁴  and Katarzyna Czabanowska ^{1,5} 

Environmental Scan (2020)

- Conducted an assessment/environmental scan of climate-health curricula (2020)
- "How can the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER) best support the goals of the European Green Deal through its network of public health schools and departments?"
- 64% offer climate-health education BUT majority were ad-hoc actions
- General lack of systematic strategy (insufficient action in preparing the future workforce)

The main goals of their current climate & health curriculum include:

- To develop an understanding of the concepts of “climate change” and “sustainability”, the process of climate change, its consequences on populations, and its health impacts
- To develop an understanding of the public health challenges of climate change
- To develop an understanding of the challenges and to identify (multisectoral) approaches and solutions
- To be equipped with the skills to do a comprehensive critical analysis and policy formation
- To increase the visibility of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- To get experience in climate and health leadership
- To relate climate change mitigation to healthcare and the role of healthcare professionals
- To raise awareness and spark interest in climate change
- To stimulate action to reduce the carbon footprint

HOWEVER – the study found that that climate and health education is currently unable to meet the actual needs of the public health field.

Climate-Health Competencies Timeline

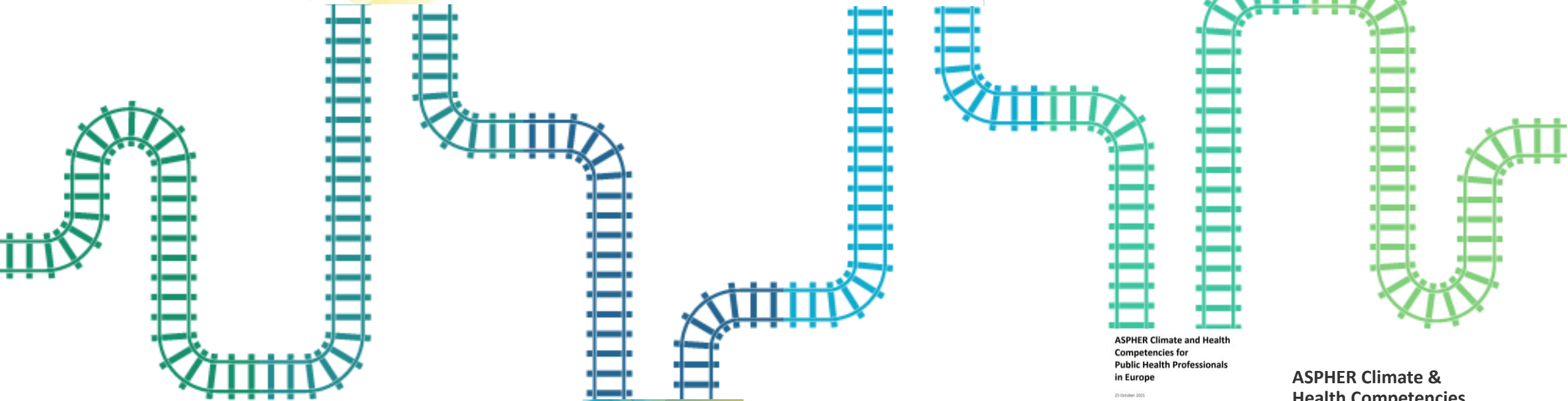


Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australia (2016) listed 2 competencies related to climate change

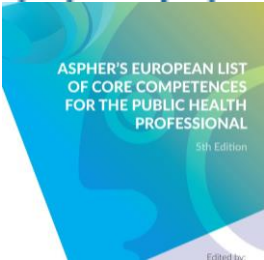


WHO-ASPHER Competency Framework for the Public Health Workforce in the European Region

WHO-ASPHER Competency Framework (2020) for the Public Health Workforce in the European Region lists 1 competency on climate change



ASPHER (2018) releases 5th ed. Of European List of Core Competences for the Public Health Professional, listing 3 competencies related to climate change



ASPHER Climate and Health Competencies for Public Health Professionals in Europe

23 October 2021

Acknowledgments

The development of the ASPHER Climate and Health Competencies for Public Health Professionals in Europe was a result of the regional and global public health community's commitment to addressing the health consequences of climate change. The following individuals and institutions contributed to this knowledge by sharing their expertise:

ASPHER Climate & Health Competencies for Public Health Professionals in Europe (2021)

*“We recognise that not every public health professional needs to become an expert in climatology and ecology, **but we argue that all graduates need to understand the basics, be able to communicate knowledgeably, and form partnerships and alliances in multidisciplinary settings with experts in these areas**”- Middleton, 2016*

ASPHER Climate and Health Competencies for Public Health Professionals in Europe

25 October 2021

Acknowledgements

The development of the ASPHER Climate and Health Competencies for Public Health Professionals in Europe and the overall work on climate and health education in public health schools was coordinated by Rana Orhan, fellow at the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER), in collaboration with John Middleton, President of ASPHER and Robert Otok, Director of ASPHER.

The state of climate action including climate and health education has been mapped in 2020 via the ASPHER survey among member schools. We acknowledge the Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education (GCCHE) for their help by sharing their survey, and all ASPHER member schools who contributed to the knowledge by sharing their climate actions.

The ASPHER Climate and Health Competencies for Public Health Professionals in Europe builds on the GCCHE's Climate & Health Key Competencies for Health Professions Students by bringing it to the context of the European Region. We acknowledge Sharmi Haque of the ASPHER Young Professionals Programme for their contributions.



Domain 1: Knowledge and Analytical Skills

- 1.1 Knows and identifies the drivers of climate change (both natural and human-induced).**
- 1.2 Identifies the health impacts of climate change and effective responses on the part of specific health services.**
- 1.3 Understands the connection between habitat and biodiversity loss and infectious diseases.**
- 1.4 Knows the different levels of prevention, climate mitigation and adaptation, and health co-benefits of actions.**
- 1.5 Understands social and environmental determinants of health.**
- 1.6 Understands emergency planning/preparedness.**
- 1.7 Knows how to access and interpret relevant local, national, European and global information and accurate science about climate change effects on health.**
- 1.8 Applies climate and health knowledge to improve decisions about public health services and adapt and improve population health.**
- 1.9 Knows how to develop strategies for reducing the carbon footprint of health care delivery, from the hospital setting to the outpatient setting, based on “green health care” principles.**
- 1.10 Knows the ethical, professional and legal obligations relevant to climate and health.**



Domain 2: Communication and Advocacy

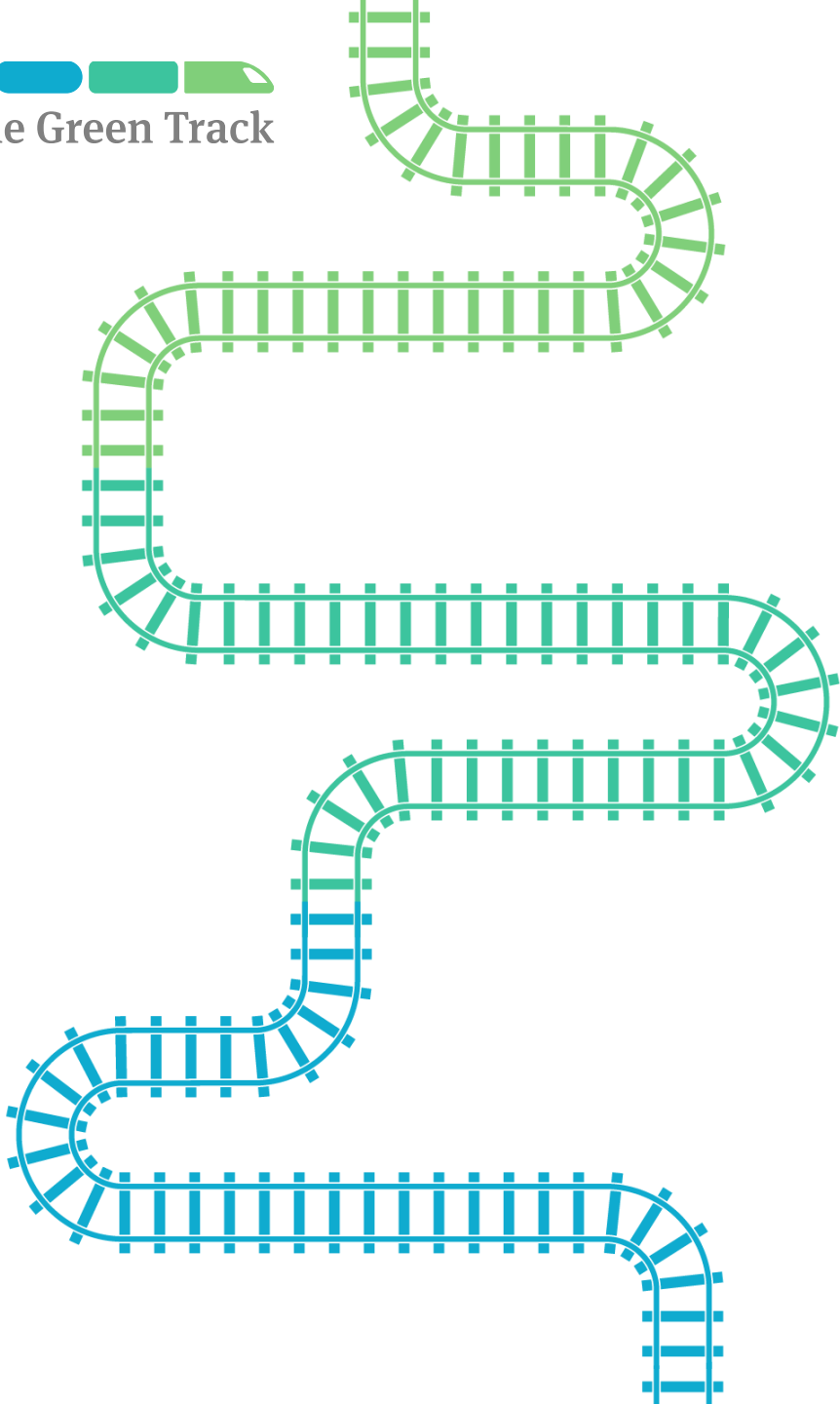
2.1 Demonstrates effective communication with stakeholders about climate and health topics by defining the target audience, listening and developing audience-appropriate messaging.

2.1.2 Communicates climate and health messages (including health co-benefits) effectively (both in writing and verbally) through a range of modern media and social marketing to lay, professional, academic and political audiences.

2.1.3 Identifies challenges to climate communication (e.g., climate scepticism and special interest lobbying).

2.2 Understands the role of public health professionals in climate-health activism and policy engagement.

2.2.2 Knows how public health professionals can partner with relevant stakeholders to reduce greenhouse gas footprint from the public health sector.



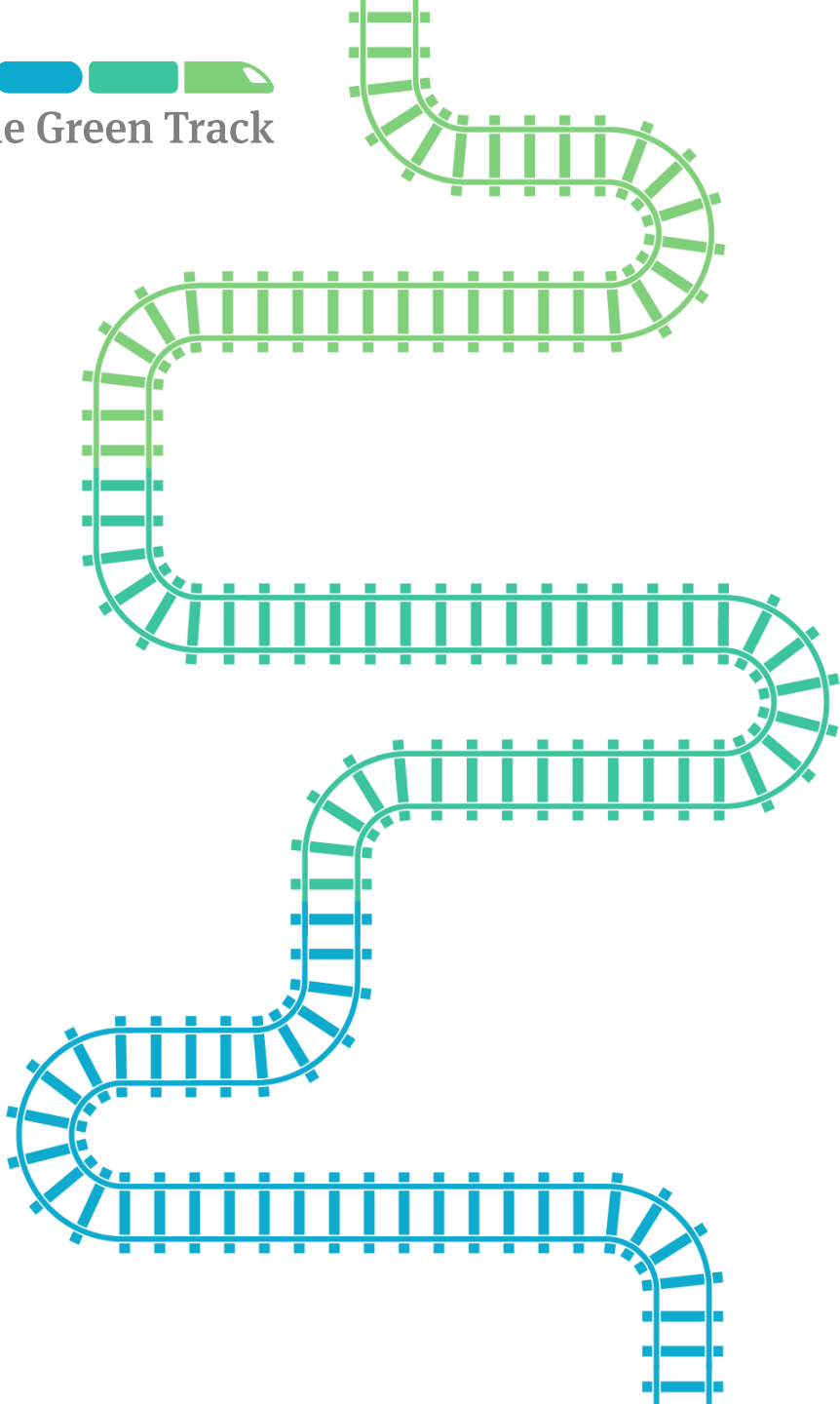
Domain 3: Collaboration & Partnerships

3.1 Works collaboratively and across sectors in local, national and European organisational structures on climate and health issues.

3.1.1 Identifies, connects and manages relationships with stakeholders in interdisciplinary and intersectoral projects on climate and health issues.

3.1.2 Evaluates partnerships and addresses barriers to successful collaboration to improve climate and health.

3.1.3 Describes best practices in interprofessional collaboration: information-sharing, collegial cooperation, and collective action.



Domain 4: Policy

4.1 Understands the role of national, European and global policy frameworks and governance structures to address health risks associated with climate change

4.1.1 Knows the role of current frameworks for understanding and responding to climate-health challenges, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal.

4.1.2 Describes the role of governance as it relates to health policy and climate change.

Next Steps



Moving towards the right to 'health for all' by training the public health and wider health workforce on climate change and health

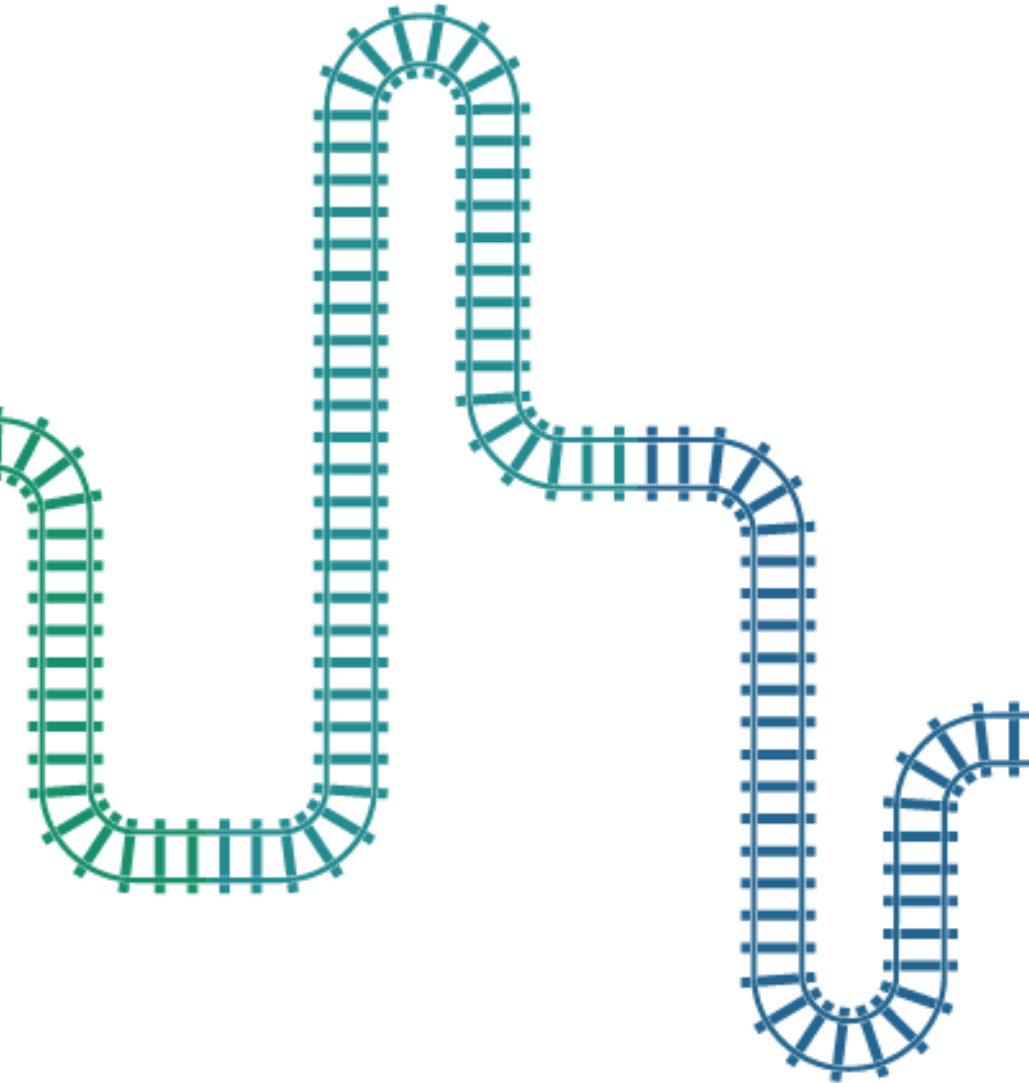
Joint statement by the EU Health Policy Platform's thematic network "Climate action through public health education and training"

Climate change continues to be the biggest challenge of the 21st century, with profound and growing negative consequences on public health. The cost of inaction to act in a timely and systemic manner will have catastrophic implications for the planet, the ecosystem, our livelihoods, notably the health and social systems of today and in the future.

- Joint Statement by the EU Health Policy Platform Thematic Network « Climate Action through public health education and train »
- Incorporate climate-health as a thematic working group in ASPHER to hold accountability for partners to adopt curriculum
- Find ways to resolve challenges for integration of competencies



On the Green Track



Thank you!

Email tara.chen@aspheer.org to follow our climate-health work !

Twitter: @TaraTChen
@ASPHEROffice

#TheGreenTrack