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# The role of community health workers in building bridges and improving community health literacy

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# European Public Health Week

## The role of community health workers in building bridges and improving community health literacy

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Thursday 16 May 2024 Webinar "Health through the life course: Breaking down silos"

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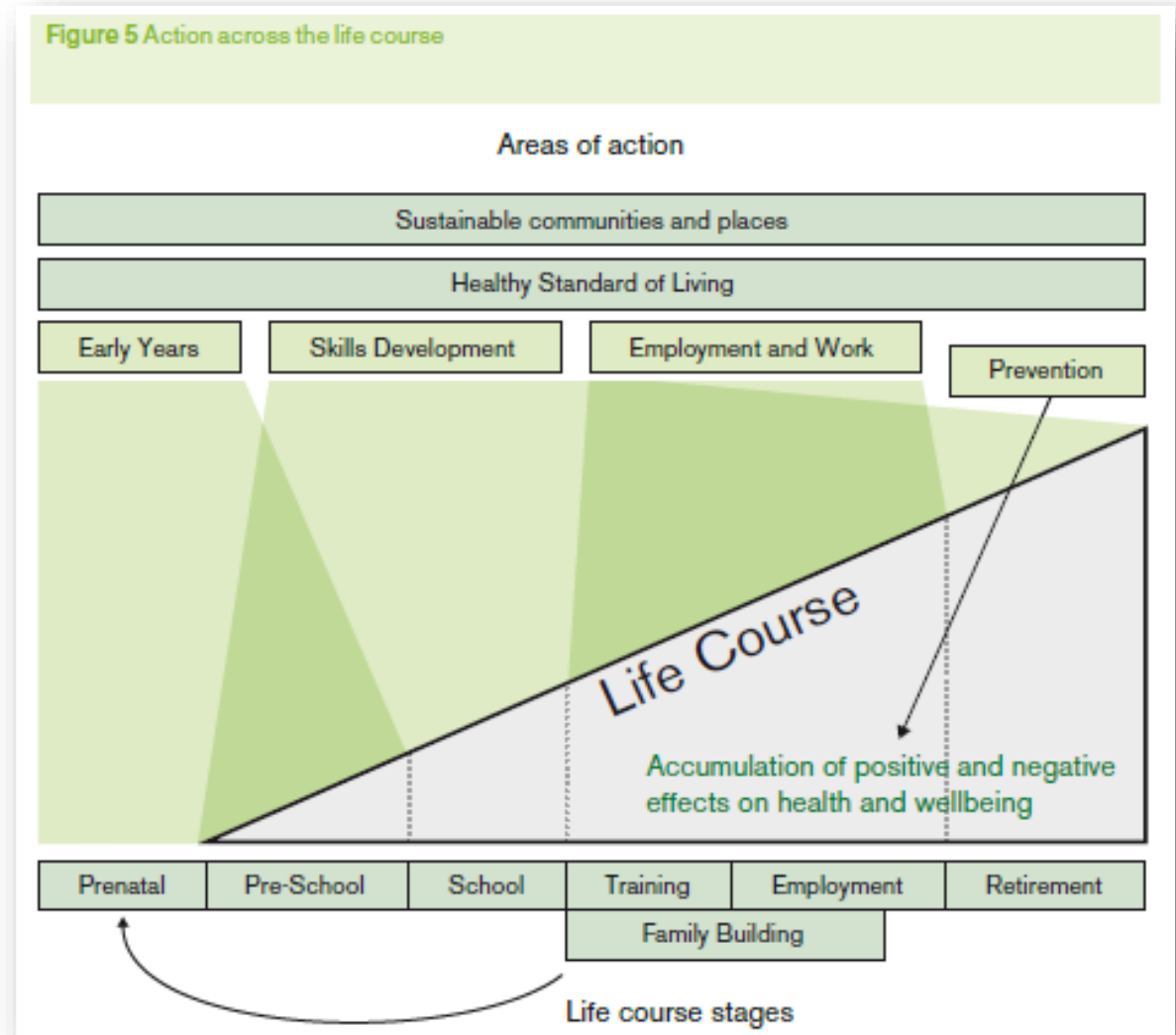
**Université  
de Rennes**



**Inserm**

What do we share with our children, parents, friends and neighbours whatever the life course stage we are at?

One answer is our daily living conditions...

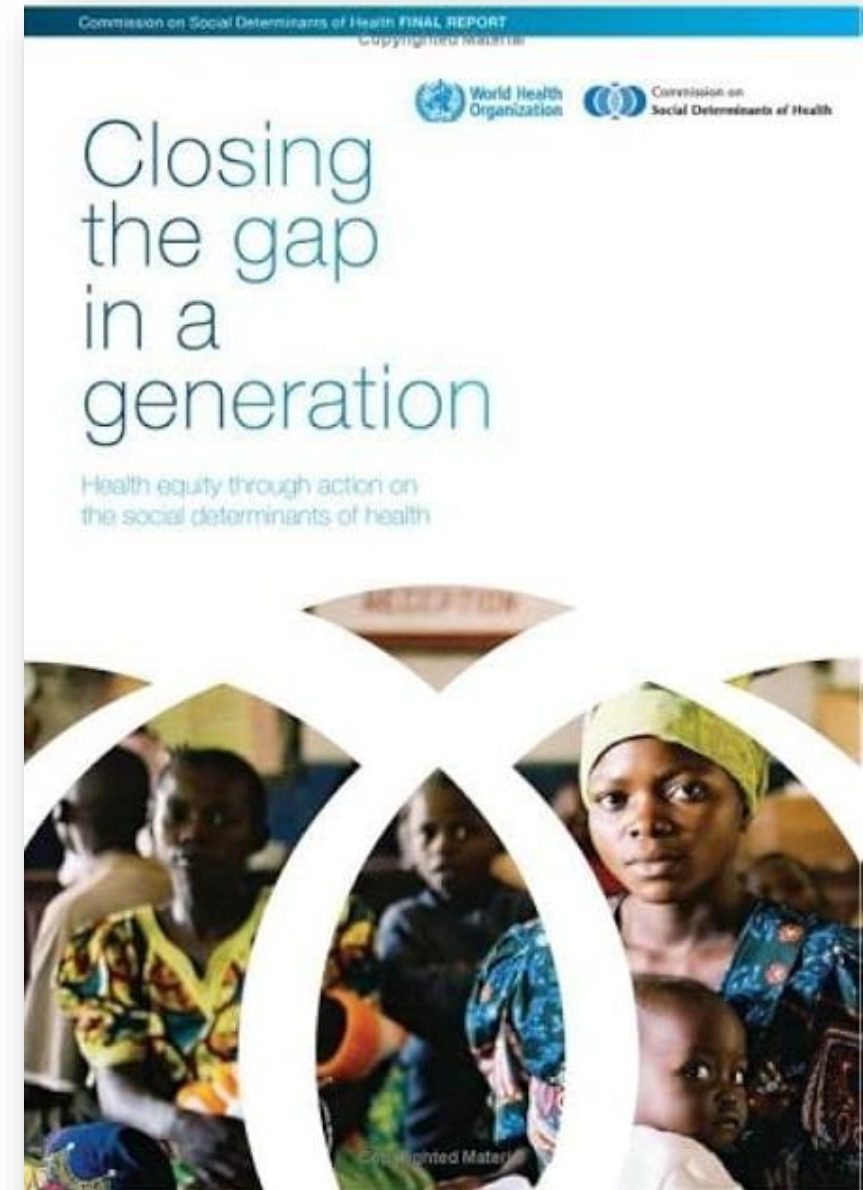


Source: The Marmot Review. (2010). Fair Society, Healthy Lives : The Marmot review. The Marmot Review.

# The WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health

Three main recommendations:

1. Improve daily living conditions
2. Tackle the inequitable distribution of power, money, and resources
3. Measure and understand the problem and assess the impact of action



# Theories on social inequalities in health point to differences in...

- Access to resources (information, money, networks, green space...);
- Exposure to conditions harmful to health (job insecurity, mould, pollution...) and;
- Wear and tear of the body as a result of stress generated by social position and discrimination.

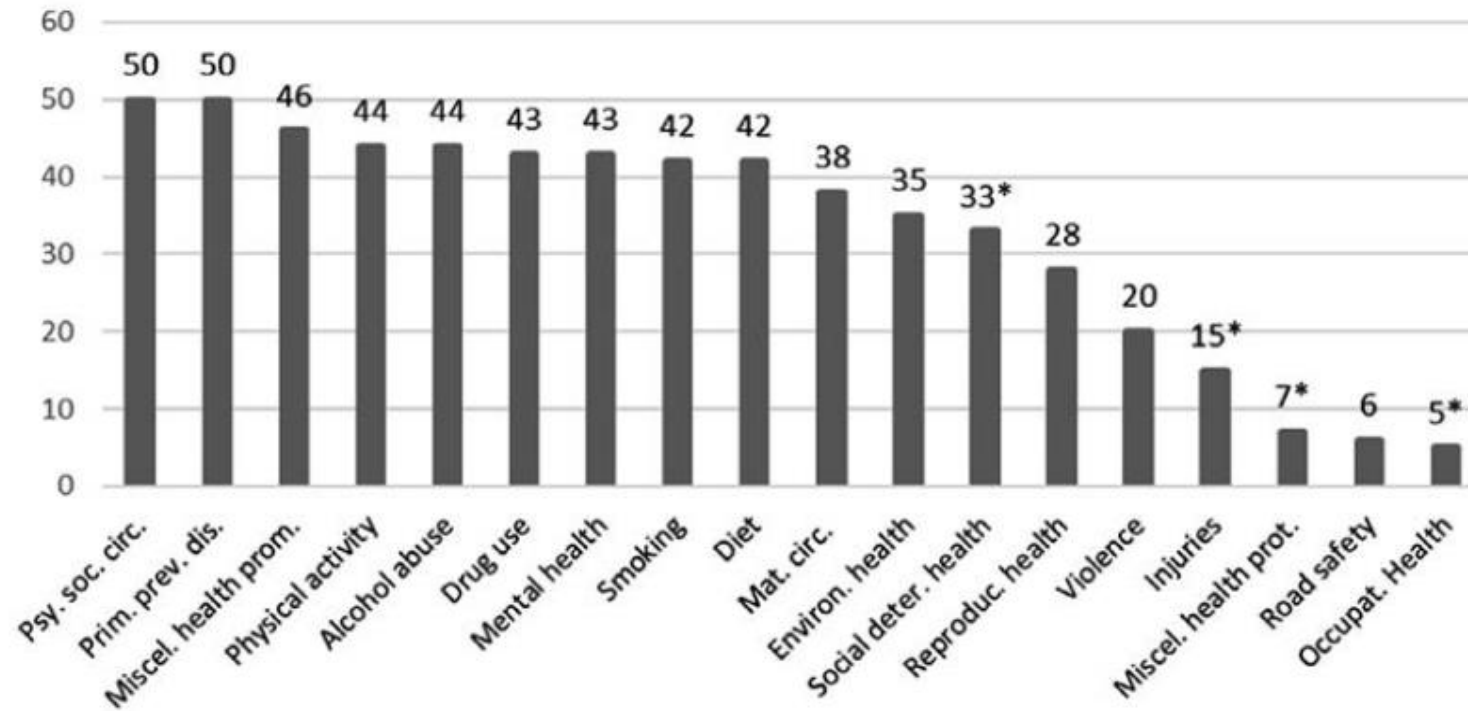
# Local Health Contracts

CloterreS inventory of Local Health Contracts signed between January 2015 and March 2018 (n=165)

- 2009 French Health Act
- Actions in the fields of Prevention, health promotion, environmental health, social care and access to health care
- Contracts between a Regional Health Agency and a local government
- A full time community health worker manages the local health contract.
- Local Health Contracts in mainland France and overseas now number in the hundreds.



Number of contracts addressing each of the “health promotion, primary prevention and protection” topics at least once (N = 53)



Le Bodo, Y., Fonteneau, R., Diallo, D., Harpet, C., Hudebine, H., Jabot, F., Sherlaw, W., Kendir, C., Bourgueil, Y., & Breton, E. (2022). Measuring local strategies to address the determinants of population health : Development and application of the CLotterres instrument. *Revue d'Epidémiologie et de Santé Publique*, 70(6), 286-298. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respe.2022.09.073>



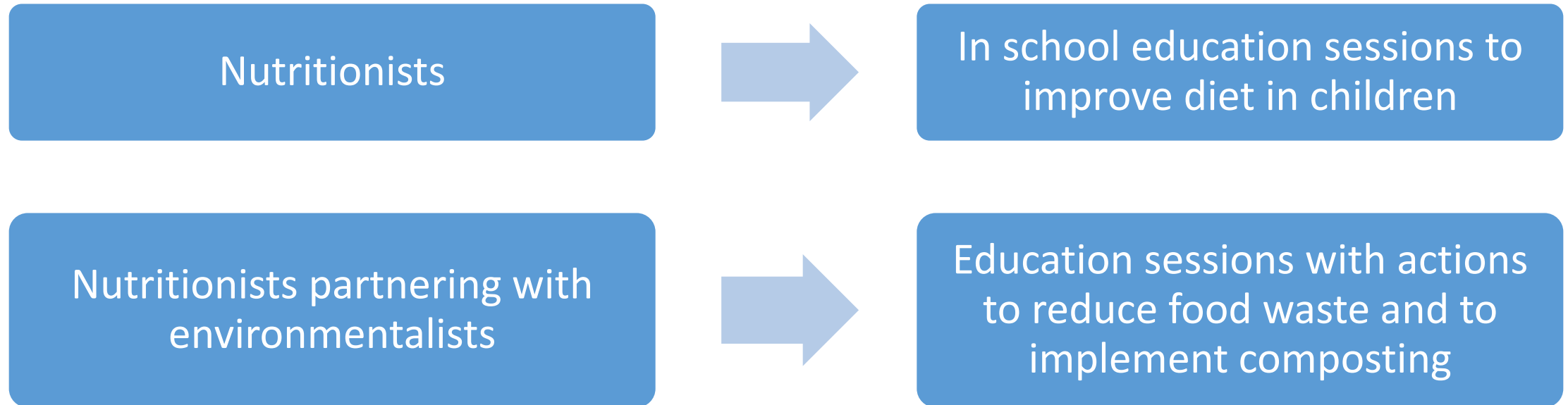
# What do we know about the benefits associated with Local health contracts (study conducted in Brittany and Pays de la Loire)?

- New initiatives on the territory
- Actions better adapted to local context
- Expansion of efforts on determinants other than health care
- Emergence of actions not initially planned for in the contract
- Blurring of administrative boundaries
- Evolution of existing single-objective actions towards actions providing several solutions.



# Breaking down silos opens up new realms of possibilities

An illustration from a Local Health Contract that built partnership between two sectors...



# Community Health literacy to address the upstream determinants of health

- Unequal distribution of power impedes improvement in daily living conditions;
- Local authorities often prioritize other investments than the one that would make a real difference (e.g. housing);
- Community needs to be health literate in the policy process and the advocacy strategies;
- They need to occupy policy spaces where there are not seen entitled to be in or to belong to.

Table 2. Synthesis of two general perspectives of health literacy.

	Locus of Change for HL Enhancement	Outcome of HL Enhancement	SDoH Addressed
HL as an individual property	Understand, interpret and critically analyse health information. Make informed decision on health and wellbeing	Improved communication in health, improved health-related behaviours, increased adherence to medications, increased individual participation to health promotion and prevention activities, decreased morbidity and mortality	<i>Proximal factors</i> Individual lifestyle factors, Biological factors, Behaviours
HL as a collective property	Knowledge on the broader, upstream determinants of health. Capacity for community mobilisation for change. Capacity for policy advocacy	Change in upstream SDoH, improvement in daily living conditions (housing, social support, urban design, etc.)	<i>Distal factors (that may have a significant impact on proximal ones)</i> Environmental factors, Living conditions

# For more information...

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