

## EHFG 2020 MAIN THEME

### **Dancing with elephants**

New partnerships for health, democracy, business

The determinants of health and well-being are often driven by the interests of big players, which are not always aligned with public health agendas. In order to purposefully engage with these giants while safeguarding the interests of people, we need to conceptualise new partnership models – learn to “dance with elephants” - but we should be careful not to get our toes crushed. The COVID-19 pandemic has put into sharp focus the current fault lines in our systems and highlighted the need for true cross-sector and cross-border collaboration.

Critical questions are necessary now more than ever: how can we shift decision-making power and momentum for innovation away from small politico-economic circles? Can we learn from disruptive business models and social entrepreneurship? Should all stakeholders sit at the table, irrespective of political ideologies, interests and values, or is there a line to be drawn in who we are willing to partner with and when? Are our current democratic systems, which encourage action around four-year electoral cycles, fit to act effectively on complex and diverse long-term challenges such as non-communicable diseases or emergency preparedness? Only by confronting heavy, uncomfortable and controversial topics can we move forward on democratising health and well-being, and reach SDG3 for all.

Many of the elephants we want to spotlight during this conference sit at a complicated nexus of economic, political and social agendas. Dancing with them therefore means, amongst other things, addressing political and commercial determinants of health in tandem. The ongoing pandemic may have created the momentum needed for real and sustainable change: Can we mobilise the political will to regulate, form intersectoral partnerships, and adopt a whole of society approach, accommodating each other’s strengths and limitations?

Join us online for the EHFG 2020 and help us reconceptualise ideas and approaches that are standing in the way of progress. Let’s learn a new dance!

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