

Congress Programme Committee

Pekka Puska

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Pekka Puska trained in Finland and spent his sabbatical at Stanford University. World famous for having led the North Karelia Project in Finland (1972-1977), which reduced CVD mortality by 80%, he has also been:

- Director General of the National Institute for Health and Welfare in Finland (THL), where he still has an office
- Director for NCD Prevention and Health Promotion at WHO
- President of the World Heart Federation
- President of International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI)
- Member of Finnish National Parliament.

Pekka Puska will be coordinating the Global Health/ Political advocacy track of the WCC 2016 scientific programme.

What makes WCC 2016 special?

WCCs are a unique forum for global cardiology, cardiovascular disease and heart health issues.

As an interactive platform between a wide range of professions, geographies and resource settings WCCs provide a unique network and insight from different perspectives to understand the issues at hand.

At WCC2016 global heart health will be on the stage more than ever.

What led you along your career path?

I have always been interested in the interface between medicine and social issues – namely public health. Cardiovascular disease is the main contemporary issue in public health as the world's first cause of death.

What is the biggest challenge facing heart health today?

Today we have a huge potential for improving heart health on a global scale with a wide range of proven options and very good evidence based strategies and action plans. The biggest challenge today is implementation, because of the many obstacles – including political controversies and strong industry lobbies. Protecting economic interests and putting in place heart friendly health policies are not always hand in hand.

How is the world of heart health shifting?



Many changes have occurred over the last few years such as novel tools in technology, a stronger evidence base for prevention, effective global and national strategies and new organizational structures. These provide a whole new realm of opportunity for heart health.

How will WCC 2016 impact Cardiovascular Health in your region and your daily practice?

After WCC 2016 I hope to see a push to stronger preventive action by health services and through political decisions.

On a personal level, WCC 2016 will provide me with inspiration from colleagues around the globe.