



# TRANSFORMING ACCESS TO CARE WITH THE SWISS LEARNING HEALTH SYSTEM

Swiss Learning Health System  
Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine  
University of Lucerne

Access to care  
European Public Health Week  
24 May 2023

# Speakers



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# Outline

1. Introduction
2. The Swiss Learning Health System
3. Learning cycles in the Swiss health system
4. Learning cycles in access to healthcare
5. Lessons learned within the Swiss Learning Health System



IOM ROUNDTABLE ON EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE

# THE LEARNING HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Workshop Summary



INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE  
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

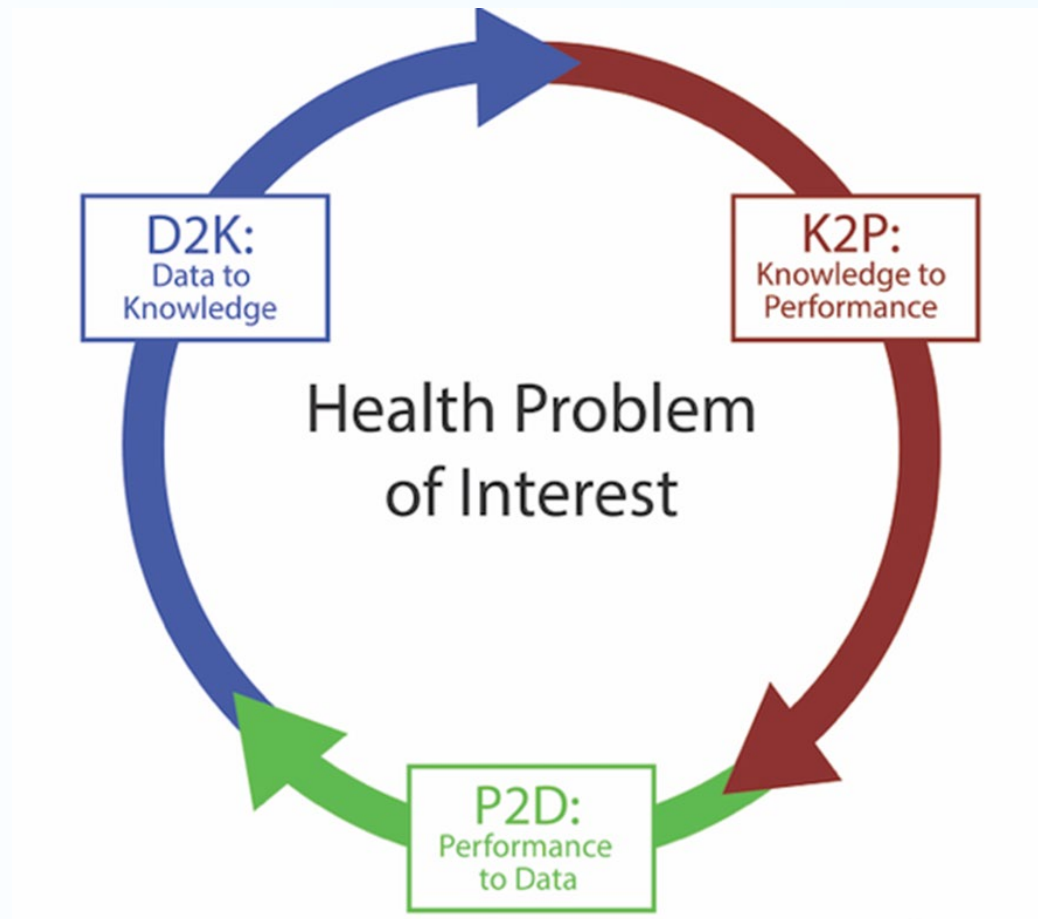


Flagship  
report

# Learning health systems: pathways to progress

EDITED BY KABIR SHEIKH AND SEYE ABIMBOLA





Friedman, C. P. (2022)

# Addressing the complexity of health systems

Because of their complexity health problems often defined as “fuzzy” (or “wicked”)

- hard to define and resolve in a **traditional way**
- involve many interdependencies and stakeholders, often multicausal and socially complex
- pandemics, rising healthcare costs, digital divide, ageing





# Learning Health Systems ...

- ... are a departure from data practices that are governed by the intended use for data (research, quality improvement, clinical care, public health etc.).
- ... aim at enabling continuously and rapidly operating cycles of study, feedback, and practice change, regardless of the original intention for data collection.

Platt, J. E., Raj, M., & Wienroth, M. (2020)



# Learning Health Systems ...

“ Learning Health Systems improve individual and population health by marrying discovery to implementation (...). ”

Friedman, C. P. (2022)



Ongoing learning via dialogue between science, policy and practice



Knowledge translation: evidence ➔ dissemination and application



# The Swiss Learning Health System

# The Swiss context



Population: 8.7 million

- predominantly urban, with three-quarters living in towns and cities

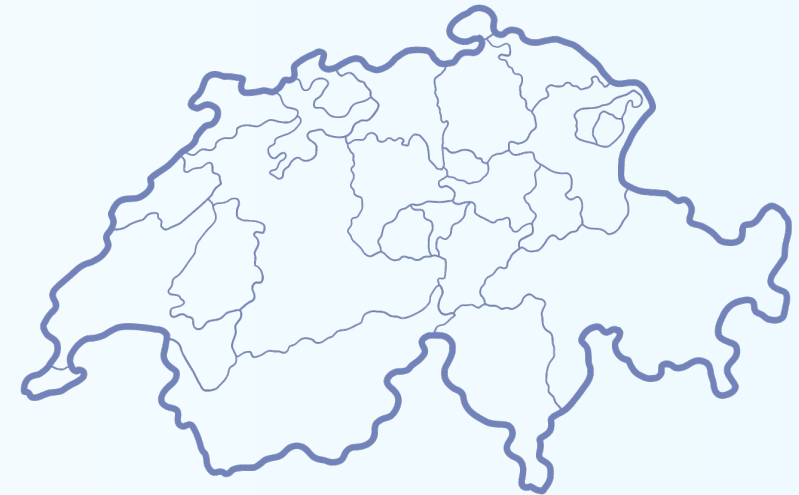


Highly decentralized health care system:

- 26 cantons
- each is independently responsible for funding, monitoring, coordinating, and promoting health care



Life expectancy is one of the highest in the world (83 years)



# Who we are?

## The Swiss Learning Health System (SLHS) –

A national health systems and services research initiative that aims at bridging the gap between research, policy and practice.

We seek to link all stakeholders in the Swiss health system – patients, providers, insurers, researchers and policy-makers – to enable the development and continuous integration of evidence-informed solutions.



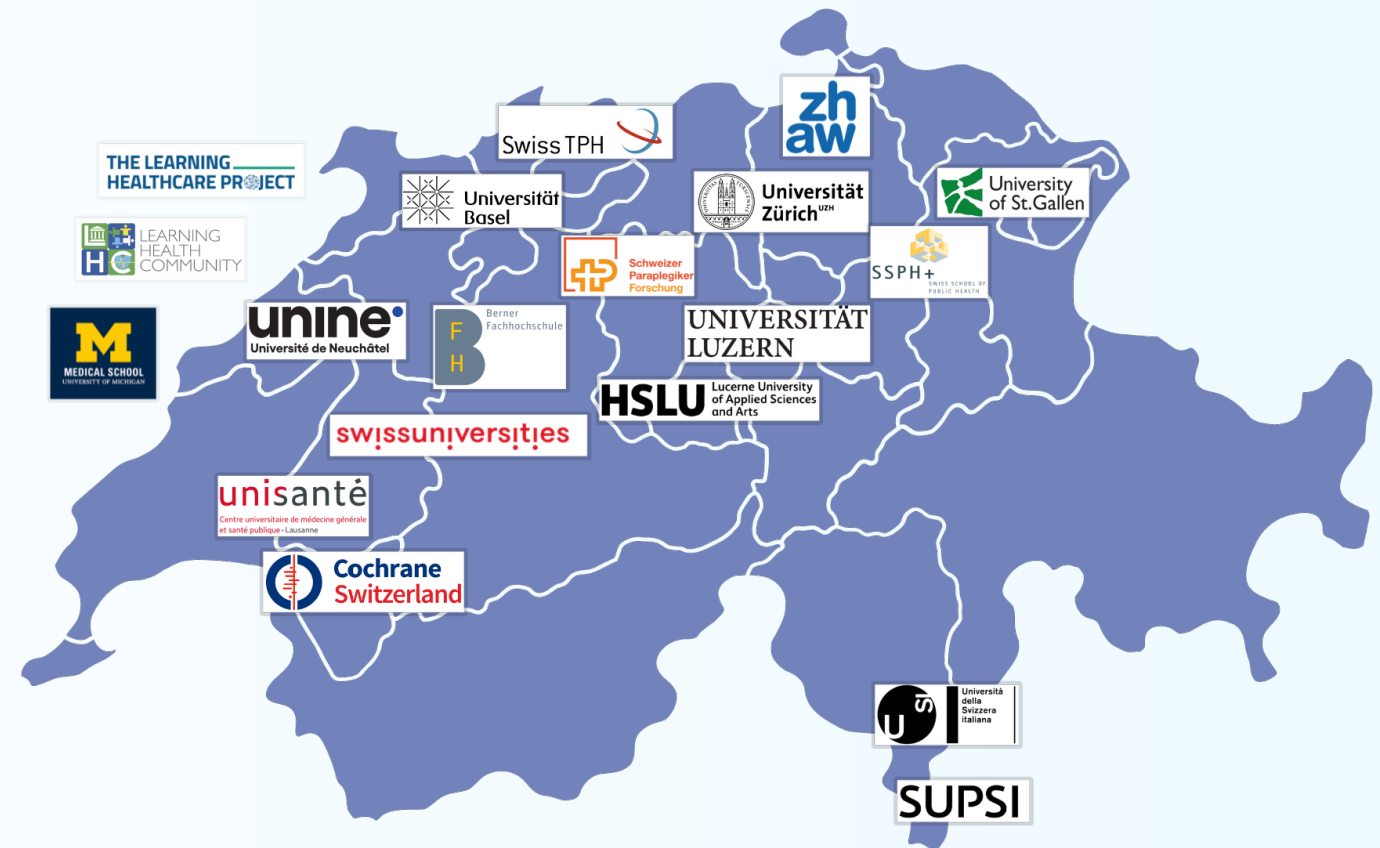
# Our growing network





# Our growing network

- 11 partner universities
- Health System Advisory Board:  
11 representatives from policy and practice
- Governing Board:  
33 academic professionals
- International partners



# Our goals

The overarching objective is to **strengthen the Swiss health system** and create a culture of shared decision-making in which sound **scientific evidence is continuously integrated into the health system.**

- 1 Establish a bridging mechanism between research, policy, and practice;
- 2 Build scientific capacities for health systems and services research;
- 3 Develop standards for the management of health information.



# **Promoting learning cycles in the Swiss health system**

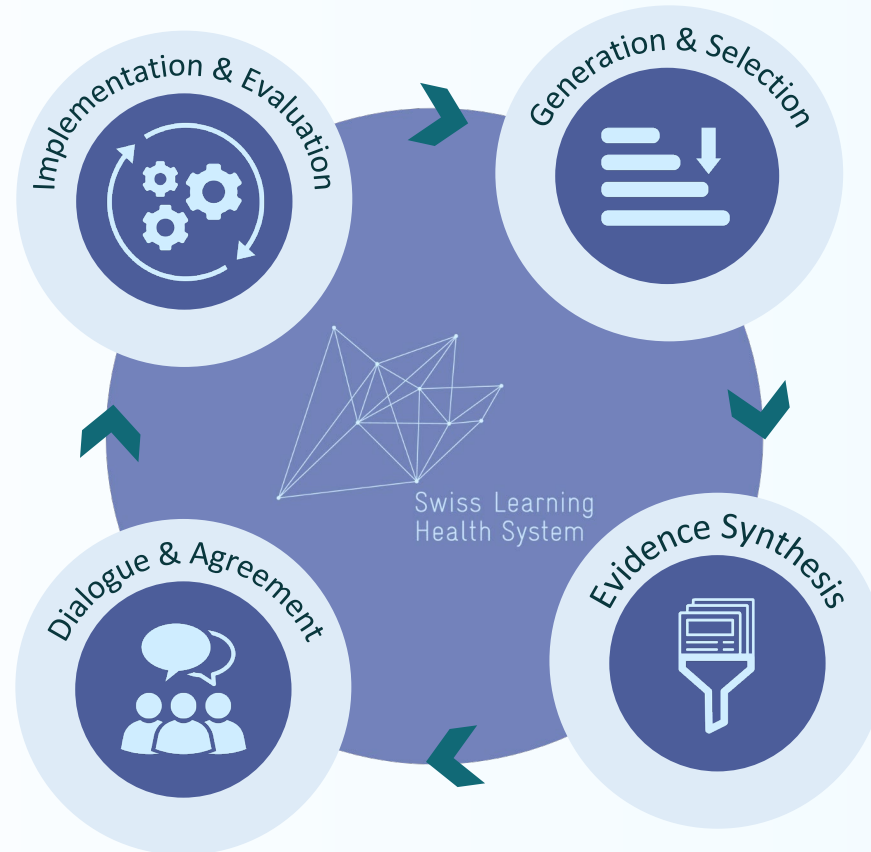
# Bridging mechanism of the SLHS

## Monitoring and Evaluation

SLHS monitors and evaluates implementation of measures to enhance the quality of health systems

## Stakeholder Dialogues

Stakeholders work and discuss issues together to solve problems in the Swiss health system



## Issue Identification & Prioritization

SLHS identifies and prioritizes pressing topics and challenges in the Swiss health system

- Collaboration in the network

## Policy Briefs

SLHS produces evidence syntheses (Policy Briefs) as input for stakeholder dialogues

- Collaboration with stakeholders

# What have we done so far?

Since 2017...

**50+** PhDs

PhD Students and Alumni involved

**26** Policy Briefs & Stakeholder Dialogues

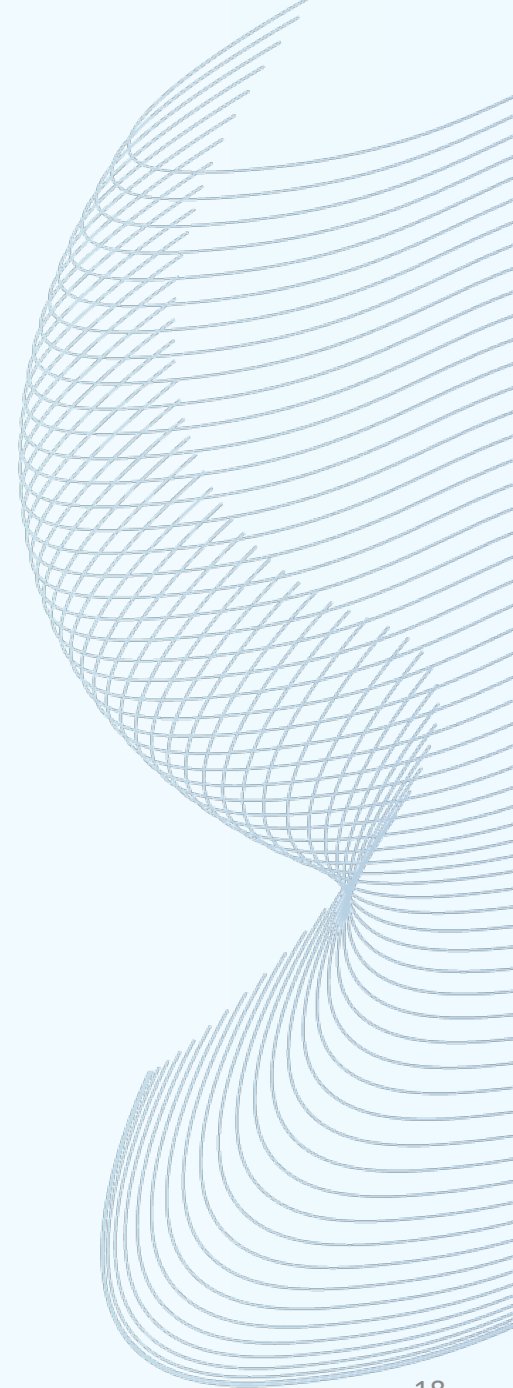
**90+** professionals

Participated in stakeholder dialogues


- 60+ people from policy and practice
- 30+ researchers

Evaluations have shown a high level of satisfaction:

- provision of policy briefs as a basis for discussion
- composition of stakeholders







# **Supporting learning cycles in access to healthcare**

# Improving access to care: role of learning cycles



## 1. Collect and analyse health data:

- Identify gaps in care and areas of unmet need
- Pinpoint populations at risk of poor health outcomes for tailored interventions
- Detect disparities in healthcare access and outcomes among different demographic groups
- Address health inequities by examining social determinants (income, education, race)



## 2. Facilitate an open dialogue:

- Promote issue identification and evidence generation with input from all stakeholders
- Enhance stakeholder connections for faster research-to-policy implementation



# **Access to care in SLHS projects**

# Sustainable Financing of Psychosocial Services for Refugees

## The Issue:

- Many asylum seekers suffer from mental health problems due to the situation in their country of origin, the migration process or post-migration stress factors.
- Psychosocial services (+ outpatient psychiatric therapy if needed) are much more effective for this group than inpatient therapy in a psychiatric clinic.
- But who should pay for such psychosocial services?

**Stakeholder Dialogue:** Representatives from cantonal departments (health, social affairs, integration) from several cantons, regional integration structures, psychiatry/psychology, social work and a psychosocial service for refugees.

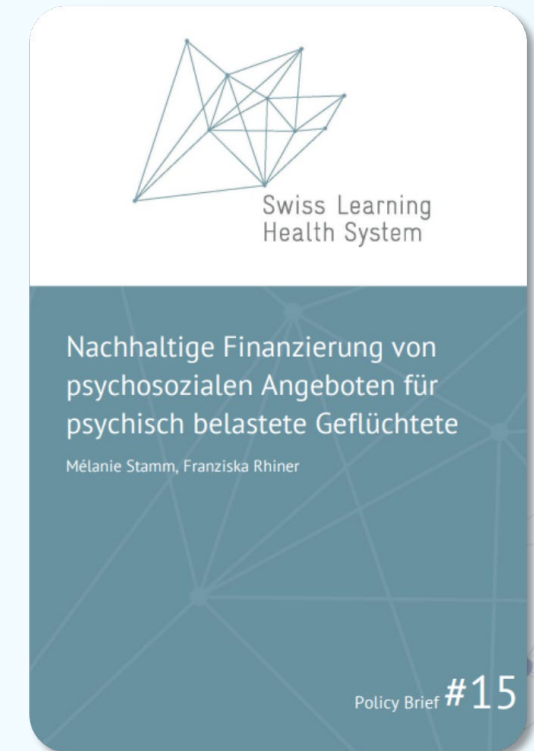
## Policy Brief Recommendations:

1. Promoting financing solutions with cantonal involvement
2. Increasing transparency for providers and case managers
3. Establishing transparency on the costs of health and social care for refugees and potential savings

## Authors:

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**Franziska Rhiner, MA** - NCBI Schweiz  
«Brückenbauer\*innen und Trauma»



[LINK TO THE BRIEF](#)

# Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) in General Practice

## The Issue:

- Switzerland: 2/3 of patients 65+ y.o. can be cared for by specialist nurses (APNs and MPAs) as a complement to medical treatment in a GP's office
- But: lack of the legal framework for independent provision of services by APNs and MPAs
- Specialist nurses' roles have not been clearly defined, nor are they able to bill their services independently

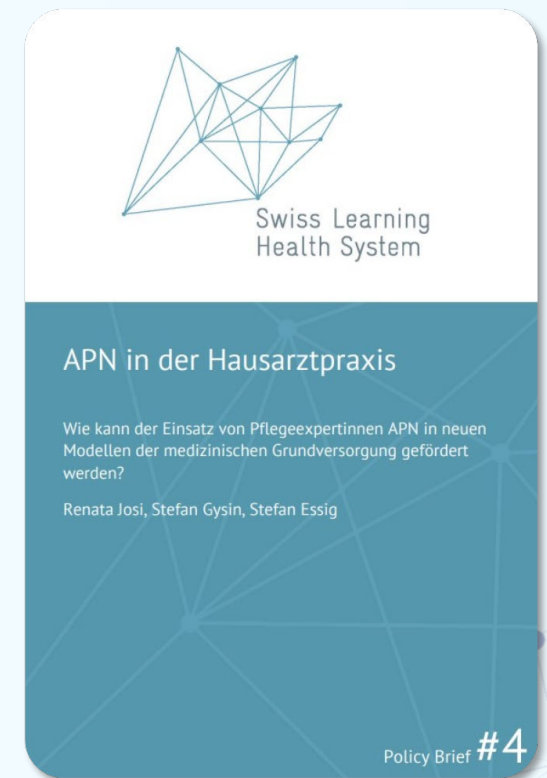
**Stakeholder Dialogue:** A stakeholder dialogue was conducted based on a policy brief, involving a panel of 13 experts

## Policy Brief Recommendations:

1. Development of a legal framework for scope of practice and job description for APNs and MPAs
2. Publicize the role of APNs and MPAs
3. Create funding opportunities for services provided by APNs and MPAs in primary care practices

## Authors:

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**Stefan Gysin, Dr. med.** - Departement für Gesundheitswissenschaften und Medizin, Universität Luzern  
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[LINK TO THE BRIEF](#)



# Health Insurance Literacy

## The Issue:

- Limited health insurance literacy (HIL) is associated with poor insurance choices, inadequate healthcare use and access
- This affects both individuals and the healthcare system
- Swiss health insurance system: Complex design and growing costs
- Need to empower individuals, especially those with limited HIL, to make informed health-related decisions

**Stakeholder Dialogue:** Panel discussion and workshop with health insurance providers and researchers

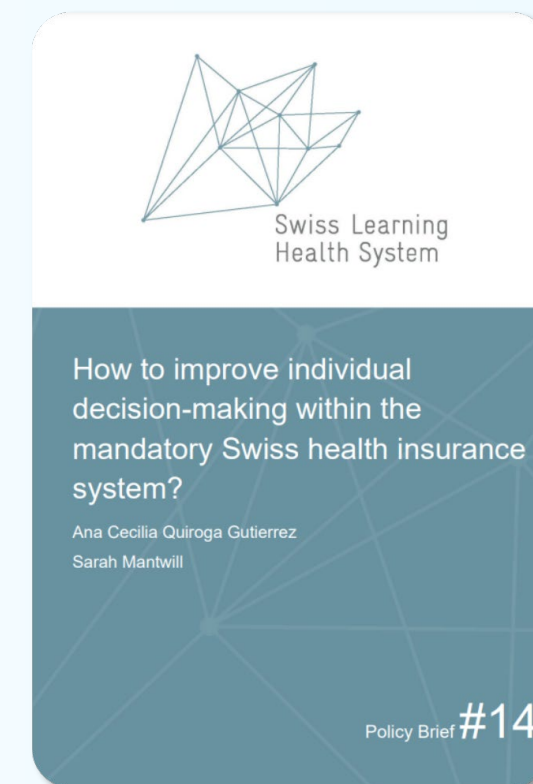
## Policy Brief Recommendations:

1. Further data collection and monitoring to assess the levels of HIL and to identify vulnerable groups in Switzerland
2. Provide appropriate tools and information for decision support,
3. HIL skill development and strengthening through compulsory education

## Authors:

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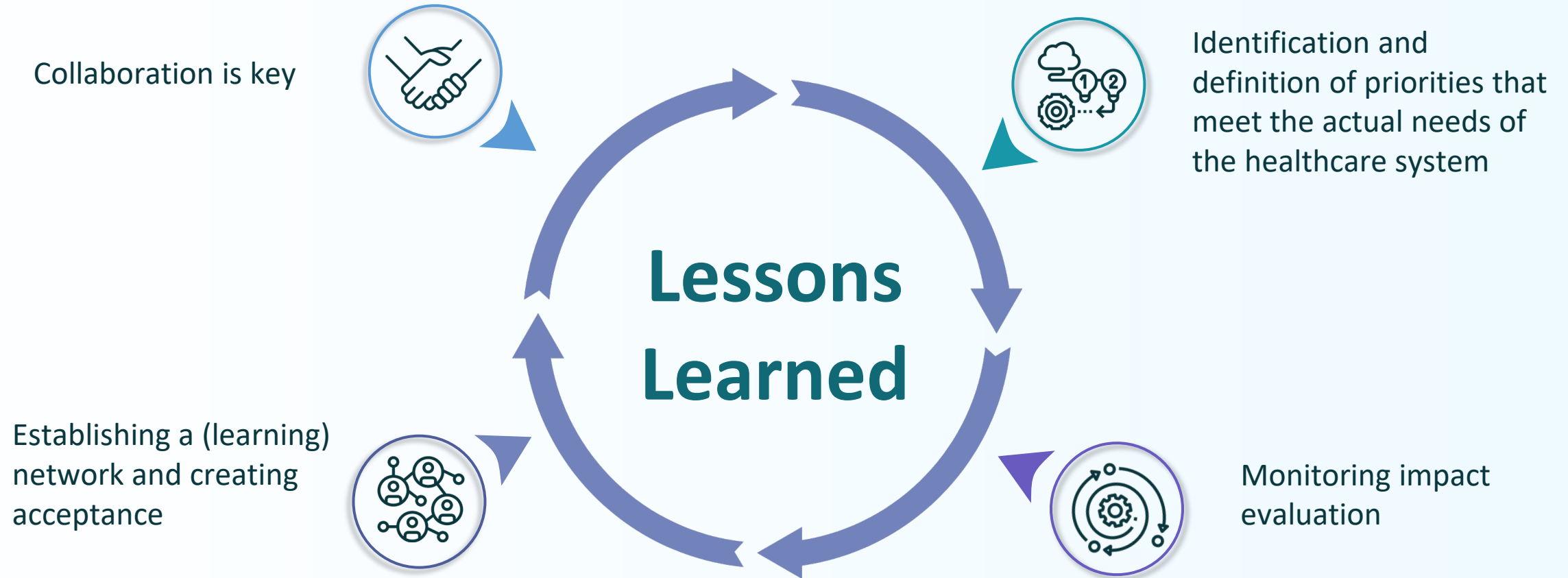


[LINK TO THE BRIEF](#)



**What are the lessons learned?**

## Establishing continuous dialogue takes time and resources



# Thank you for joining us today!

## Do you have questions?



Swiss Learning  
Health System

Our website: [slhs.ch](https://slhs.ch)  
Follow us on [LinkedIn](#)  
Email: [slhs@unilu.ch](mailto:slhs@unilu.ch)