Launching in 2018:

HIFA Project on Multilingualism

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

This document describes the terms of reference, membership and methods of communication for the HIFA Project on Multilingualism.

The Project website is here: http://www.hifa.org/projects/multilingualism

2. Background

HIFA (Healthcare Information For All) is a professional global health network working in collaboration with WHO and currently supported by the BMA (lead funder), WHO, TDR, *The Lancet* and more than 280 other health and development organisations. HIFA brings together more than 18,000 stakeholders representing more than 2500 organisations across 176 countries worldwide, with the common vision of a world where every health professional, citizen, researcher and policymaker has access to the healthcare information they need to protect their own health and the health of others. HIFA members represent the full range of stakeholders in global health (health workers, publishers, librarians, researchers, policymakers, social scientists, human rights advocates, citizen representatives, and others). One-third of members are based in Africa, one-third in Europe, and one-third in the rest of the world. HIFA members interact 24/7 on five global discussion forums (HIFA Forums) in three languages (English, French, Portuguese).

Tens of thousands of deaths occur needlessly every day in low- and middle-income countries because of failure to provide life-saving interventions. A major contributing factor is lack of availability and use of healthcare information in languages other than English, at all levels of the system, among citizens, health workers, publishers, researchers and policymakers.

3. Terms of Reference

The HIFA Project on Multilingualism promotes:

1. *communication*, discussion and debate on the HIFA forums, on issues relating to language and healthcare information and learning needs among citizens, health workers, publishers, researchers and policymakers.

2. *understanding* of language and information needs and how to address these issues, and build the relevant parts of the HIFA Voices database

3. *advocacy* to improve the availability and use of health information for all end-users in a language that they can understand.

In addition, the Project will promote and support alignment (eg scope, moderation approach, branding), development and cross-fertilisation across the HIFA forums (English, French, Portuguese, Spanish…) to maximise their collective impact towards the realisation of the HIFA vision and goals, and will assess feasibility and need for further languages (eg Arabic, Chinese, Russian…)

The HIFA Project on Multilingualism was launched in March 2017 and liaises with other HIFA Projects and with the Mobile Healthcare Information For All (mHIFA) Project, which specifically promotes mHealth solutions for citizens, parents and children.

The group meets approximately once every 2 months, by skype, and communicates by email in-between. The group will provide a quarterly update for the HIFA Steering Group, which meets every 3 months, usually in London, with teleconferencing for members outside the UK.

Coordination: The group welcomes offers from group members to take on the role of coordination, in line with HIFA steering group recommendations for more HIFA Projects to help address the needs of specific user groups (eg HIFA Project on Citizens; HIFA Project on CHWs).

4. Membership
Membership is open to all HIFA members with an interest.

5. Support
The work of this group is currently unfunded.