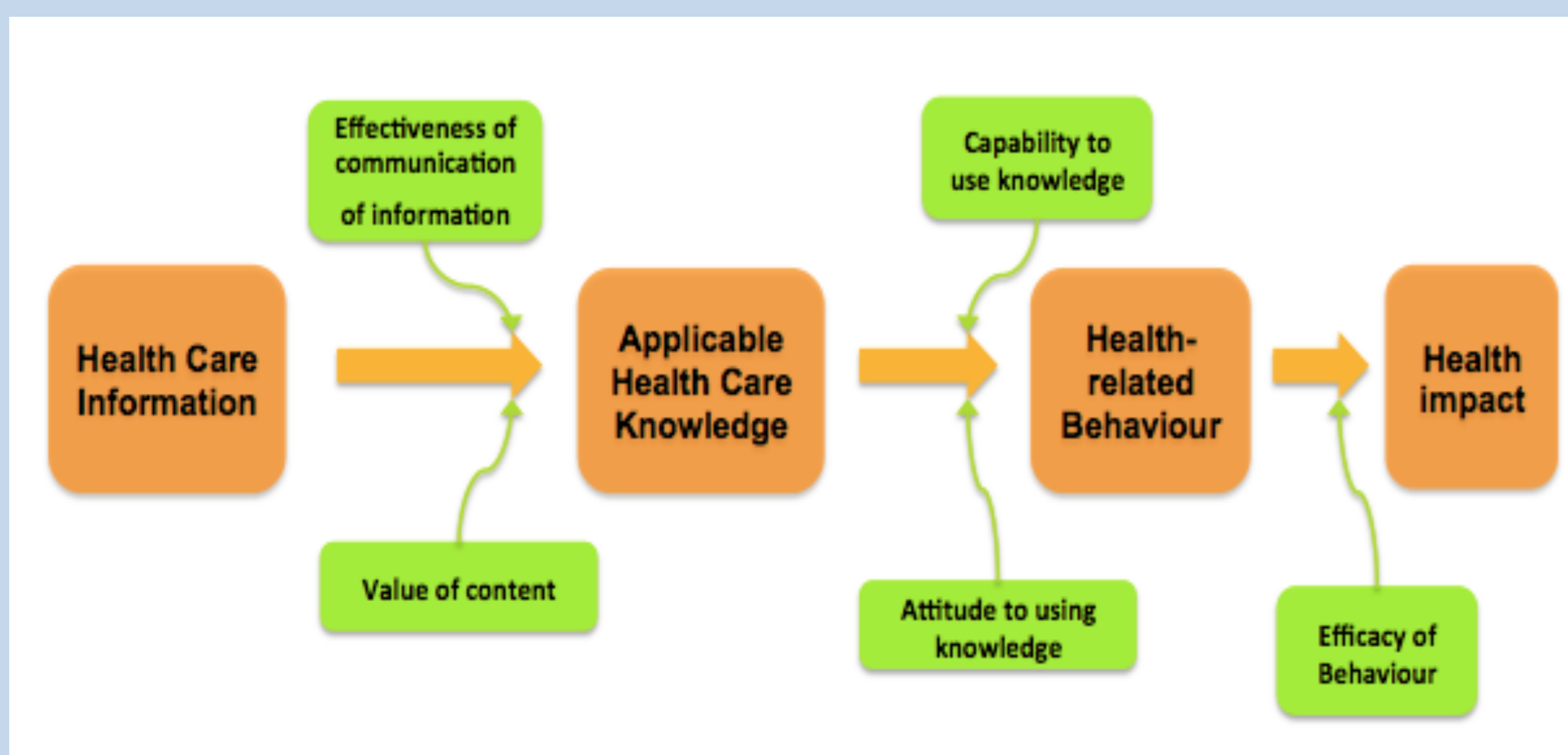
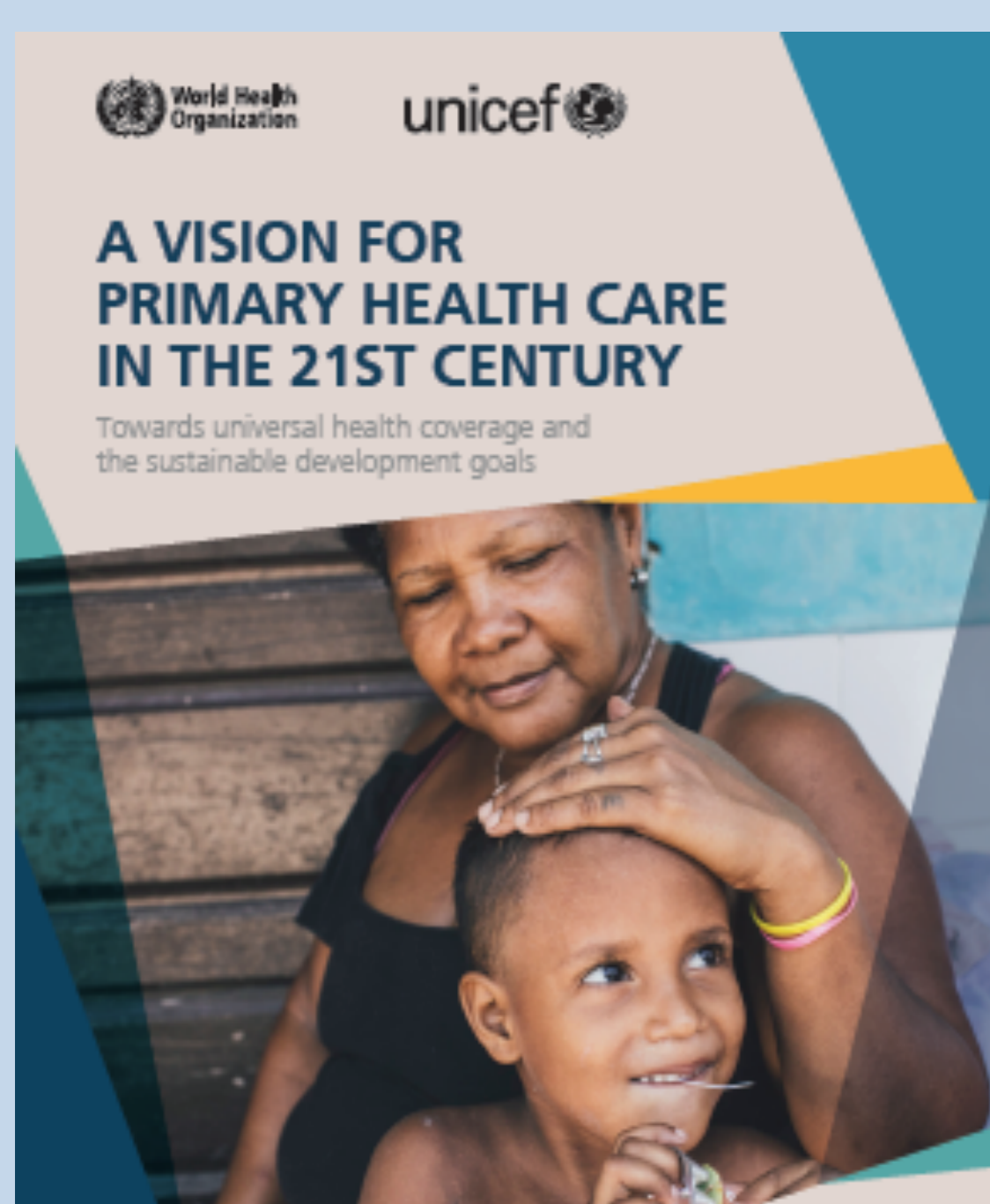


Healthcare starts with people knowing how to look after their & their families' health



But most citizens in low- and middle-income countries lack essential healthcare information (actionable information about protecting their own health and the health of others and about what to do in a healthcare situation): a lack of reliable, timely, practical healthcare information is a major obstacle to health.

The WHO vision for primary care entails wider access to healthcare information



***“People have access to the knowledge, skills and resources needed to care for themselves and their loved ones, making use of the full potential of information and communications technologies”***

A vision for primary health care in the 21st century. p 23. WHO/UNICEF 2018

Modern communication methods make this achievable

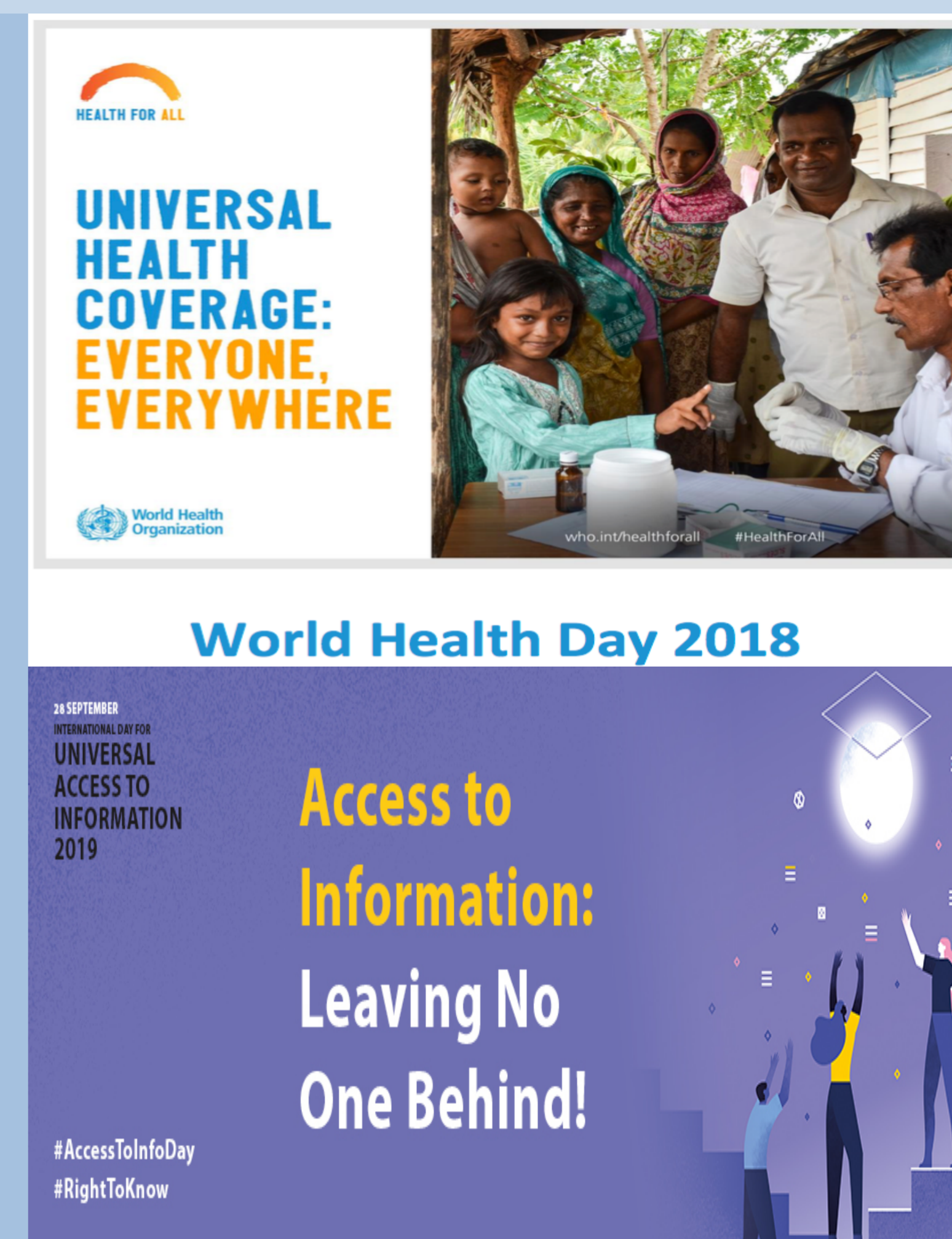
For example mobile devices can now provide wide access, even without a permanent network connection, to essential healthcare information when and where it is required and in formats, such as audio or short video clips, that can be understood by everyone regardless of literacy level<sup>1</sup>.

Such access is of proven effectiveness, for instance a systematic review<sup>2</sup> of mobile phone applications related to HIV in Africa found numerous examples of improved adherence to medication and attendance to scheduled appointments through text messaging and voice calls.

Wider access to healthcare information will accelerate Universal Health Coverage

***“Universal health coverage and sustainable development goals are empty shells without timely access to and availability of health information.”***

Dr Najeeb Al-Shorbaji, former Director, Knowledge, Ethics and Research Department, World Health Organization, Geneva



Access to essential healthcare information is a prerequisite for UHC and an accelerator for many of its components which are monitored as part of the health Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 3.8.1).

For example, a randomised trial<sup>3</sup> of a child health radio campaign in Burkina Faso indicated increases of consultations for pneumonia of 39% and for diarrhoea by 73% and an expected average reduction in under-5 mortality of 7% per year.

Providing **essential healthcare information for everyone, everywhere** offers an early and affordable win in accelerating Universal Health Coverage



## REFERENCES

1. Royston G, Hagar C, Long L-A, Dennis McMahon D, Pakenham-Walsh N, and Wadhvani N on behalf of the mHIFA Working Group, Mobile health-care information for all: a global challenge. *The Lancet Global Health*, 2015; Volume 3, No. 7, e356–e357
2. Linguissi LSG, Ouattara AK, Ntambwe EK, Mbalawa CG and Nkenfou CN. Mobile applications: effective tools against HIV in Africa. *Health and Technology*, 2017; (4): 1-8
3. Murray J, Head R, Sarrassat S, et al. Modelling the effect of a mass radio campaign on child mortality using facility utilisation data and the Lives Saved Tool (LiST): findings from a cluster randomised trial in Burkina Faso. *BMJ Glob Health*, 2018; 3:e000808.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr Neil Pakenham-Walsh, Co-ordinator, Healthcare Information for All (HIFA) & HIFA Steering Group members.

## FURTHER DETAILS

Contact Dr Geoff Royston [geoff.royston@gmail.com](mailto:geoff.royston@gmail.com)  
See [www.hifa.org](http://www.hifa.org)