



# Annual Review 2021

## Healthcare Information For All



# HIFA (Healthcare Information For All) Annual Review 2021

## Background:

WHO identified the need for Healthcare Information For All (HIFA) in 2004 and encouraged Global Healthcare Information Network (GHI-net) to take the lead, noting that 'Healthcare Information For All is an ambitious goal but it can be achieved if all stakeholders work together. The approach proposed by the Global Healthcare Information Network and its partners is innovative and promises to harness the international cooperation and understanding needed to achieve the goal'.

HIFA brings together all stakeholders as a global movement with a shared vision: "A world where every person and every health worker has access to the healthcare information they need to protect their own health and the health of others and will be protected from misinformation". HIFA is administered by the Global Healthcare Information Network CIC, a non-profit registered in the UK for this purpose. Individual forums (CHIFA, HIFA-French, HIFA-Portuguese, HIFA-Spanish) are jointly administered with operational partners including WHO.

Since the official launch of HIFA in 2006, WHO has engaged increasingly in HIFA's operations, including representation on HIFA's steering group and project working groups, and formal collaborations to support multilingualism in global health.

## Highlights of 2021

In 2021, Global Healthcare Information Network (GHI-net) continued to work with WHO and other partners to develop Healthcare Information For All (HIFA) and thereby support WHO's constitutional mandate to extend to all people the benefits of reliable healthcare information (WHO Constitution 1948) and WHO's 'quintessential function to ensure access to authoritative and strategic information on matters that affect peoples' health' (GPW13, p37).

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the vital importance of access to reliable healthcare information and protection from misinformation. Never before has everyone been so aware of the need for reliable healthcare information, and yet so vulnerable to misinformation.

## Highlights

- **Jan-Dec 2021:** HIFA supported thematic discussions on two WHO-sponsored projects: Maintaining essential health services during COVID-19, and Learning for quality health services, resulting in a series of publications on the WHO website.
- **Jan-Dec 2021:** HIFA supported thematic discussions on COVID-19, with emphasis on information aspects, reaching a total of 1,424 contributions from HIFA members worldwide, sponsored by the Global Health Academy at the University of Edinburgh.
- **March-November 2021:** Global Healthcare Information Network, the non-profit that administers HIFA, prepared and submitted an application to become a Non-State Actor in Official Relations with the World Health Organization.
- **August 2021:** HIFA catalysed and led a provocation panel session at the World Library and Information Congress, with a call to action for health information and library professionals to lead efforts to accelerate progress towards reliable healthcare information for all.
- **October 2021:** HIFA launched its new Strategy 2022-2024: Accelerating progress towards universal access to reliable healthcare information.

## HIFA Community

HIFA Forums: At the heart of HIFA is a virtual ‘think-tank’ of over 20,000 members from 180 countries, interacting across 6 forums in 4 languages: HIFA-English, CHIFA (child health and rights), HIFA-French, HIFA-Portuguese, HIFA-Spanish, and HIFA-Zambia. All six forums continued to be vibrant and to grow their membership.

The members represent the full range of providers and users of health information (health workers, publishers, librarians, researchers, policymakers, social scientists, human rights advocates, patient representatives, and others). HIFA members communicate 24/7 about how to improve the availability and use of reliable healthcare information in LMICs.

November 2021: HIFA-Spanish issued a call for expressions of interest to become the new operational partner with WHO and HIFA, taking over from the Andalusian School of Public Health.

**HIFA Country Representatives:** The Country Representative (CR) programme continued to grow, with 274 CRs in 81 countries (previously 250 in 80). Each CR is responsible for advocating for universal access to reliable healthcare information, and for growing the HIFA membership base in their respective country. They do this by leveraging their own professional networks, giving presentations (virtual or physical, where possible), radio interviews and blogs. Goran Zangana (Middle East Research Institute, Iraq) was awarded HIFA Country Representative of the Year 2021.

A new coordination structure for the HIFA country representative programme was introduced. Four regional coordinators were appointed (Africa, Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, Latin America, South East Asia) supported by a global coordinator

**HIFA Supporting Organisations:** During 2021 HIFA ratified 34 new supporting organisations, making a total of 434, demonstrating the breadth of support for the HIFA vision.

**HIFA Volunteers:** More than 500 volunteers provided their time and expertise for a growing number of projects addressing WHO priority areas (below), HIFA Country Representative programme, HIFA Steering Group, HIFA Social Media Group, and website, editing, fundraising and administrative support.

**HIFA Social Media:** The HIFA Social Media team continued to promote the HIFA vision, with leads in place for Twitter (@hifa\_org), Facebook

(HIFAdotORG), LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram. The team consistently promoted World Health Days, drawing attention to the role of reliable healthcare information for specific health issues.

**HIFA website:** HIFA worked with a pro bono consultant to prepare a redesign of the hifa.org home page. The redesign will be implemented in early 2022.

## HIFA Projects

HIFA continued to build its portfolio of projects, working with an increasing number of organisations for shared objectives. Each project supports a series of thematic discussions on all the forums in four languages, with sharing of diverse experience and expertise leading to collective understanding. Learning is harnessed and disseminated through conference presentations, peer-reviewed journals and technical briefs on the WHO and other websites. Each project is planned and implemented by a team that comprises HIFA volunteers with experience and expertise in the issue, together with staff nominated by the sponsor(s).

During 2021 HIFA further developed the Project implementation approach to include two new elements: synthesis and editing teams and catalyst groups, offering new ways for HIFA members to volunteer and build capacity.

### Highlights included:

- **Access to Health Research** – The project is sponsored by the Elsevier Foundation and supported continuing discussion on all aspects of access throughout the year.
- **COVID-19.** This one-year project (September 2020 - August 2021) is sponsored by the Global Health Academy at the University of Edinburgh, UK, to explore the information needs of health workers, policymakers, and the general public in LMICs, in relation to the current coronavirus pandemic and future pandemics. The project has supported the longest and richest discussion in HIFA's history, with more than 1400 substantive messages exchanged to date. The discussion has been analysed by staff and students at the University of Edinburgh and University of Toronto, Canada, and submitted for publication.
- **Library and Information Services.** HIFA collaborated with the International Federation of Library Associations (special interest group Evidence for Global and Disaster Health) to deliver a provocation session at the World Library and Information Congress in August 2021. The session called on the library and information community to convene all stakeholders together (LIS, health



professionals, publishers, policymakers...) to forge a path towards universal access to reliable healthcare information for all.

- **Maintaining essential health services during COVID-19 (and beyond).** This one-year project (October 2020 - September 2021) promoted cross country learning. Sponsored by the Department of Integrated Health Services, WHO, Geneva. Three thematic discussions were held on the HIFA forums, each lasting 4-6 weeks and experience and expertise were collated into three Action Briefs on the WHO website. June- August 2021: HIFA supported an 8-week 'deep-dive' exploration on how to maintain essential health services during COVID-19, looking at reproductive health, child health, mental health, non-communicable diseases, surgery, and emergency care.
- **Mobile HIFA** - Planning meetings were held with the Norwegian Institute for Global Health and Makerere University, Kampala, in preparation for a major project on the use of mobile phones by primary health workers in LMICs, starting January 2022 (below).

### Upcoming projects in 2022

**October 2021:** HIFA held planning meetings with the Norwegian Institute of Public Health on HIFA's contribution to two major projects in 2022: Support-Systems and mHealth-Innovate.

**December 2021:** HIFA finalised agreements with WHO Special Programme on Research in Tropical Diseases (TDR) to deliver a project in 2022 on Research communication.

## HIFA Voices

HIFA Voices 2.0 promises to be more efficient, sustainable and more applicable for advocacy, research and practical application. The initiative is included in the Strategy as one of the seven strategic shifts needed to accelerate progress towards universal access to reliable healthcare information.

## Communities of practice in global health

HIFA continued to collaborate with Jhpiego and PATH to build connections and collective impact among global health communities of practice, helping to organise and facilitate a number of virtual online events for CoP managers during the year.

## Publications and conferences

**HIFA: A Thematic Discussion on Maintaining Essential Health Services (Action Brief)** <https://hlh.who.int/ab-detail/findings-from-a-hifa-thematic-discussion>

**How has COVID-19 affected delivery of EHS? HIFA 2nd Discussion (Action Brief)** <https://hlh.who.int/ab-detail/how-has-covid-19-affected-delivery-of-ehs-hifa-2nd-discussion>

**September 2021:** HIFA was recognised as one of 40 systems convenors worldwide in the publication *Systems Convening: A crucial form of leadership for the 21st century.* <https://wenger-trayner.com/systems-convening/>

**December 2021:** HIFA provided expert input to a PAHO workshop on Knowledge Management and Digital Transformation.

January 2022



**HIFA and CHIFA** are part of **HIFA Global Forums**, which also include **HIFA-French**, **HIFA-Portuguese**, and **HIFA-Spanish** (in collaboration with WHO) and **HIFA-Zambia** (with the Zambia UK Health Workforce Alliance)

**HIFA** is administered by the Global Healthcare Information Network, a non-profit organisation registered in the UK.

Contact: Dr Neil Pakenham-Walsh, HIFA Coordinator: [neil@hifa.org](mailto:neil@hifa.org)

## Healthcare Information for All

Corner House, Market Street, Charlbury, Oxfordshire, OX7 3PN, UK

T: +44 (0) 1608 811899 E: [admin@hifa.org](mailto:admin@hifa.org)