



Annual Review 2022

Healthcare Information For All



Healthcare Information For All (HIFA) Annual Review 2022

Background:

WHO identified the need for Healthcare Information For All (HIFA) in 2006 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.*"

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 to be protected from misinformation".

HIFA is administered by the Global Healthcare Information Network CIC, a non-profit organization registered in the UK. Individual forums 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.

Official relations with WHO

In January 2022, Global Healthcare Information Network (GHI-Net) was admitted as a non-State actor in official relations with the World Health Organization. This means HIFA and WHO are now working together in support of 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). Our collaboration is guided by a [3-year plan](#). This collaboration empowers HIFA to support collective action by all stakeholders to secure the political and financial commitment needed for universal access to reliable healthcare information.

Other highlights of 2022

- Publication of revised HIFA Strategy 2022-2024
- Publication of thematic analysis on COVID-19 infodemic in *JMIR Infodemiology* journal
- Developing a network of networks with 50 other communities of practice in global health
- Three new projects supported by Norwegian Research Council and TDR/WHO
- Continued growth: More than 20,000 members in 180 countries; 270 country representatives; and 444 organisations that officially support the HIFA vision.

HIFA Community

HIFA Forums: At the heart of HIFA is a virtual 'think-tank' of over 20,000 members from 180 countries, interacting on 6 forums in 4 languages: HIFA-English, CHIFA (child health and rights), HIFA-French, HIFA-Portuguese, HIFA-Spanish, and HIFA-Zambia.

HIFA members represent the full range of stakeholders in the global evidence ecosystem: researchers, publishers, systematic reviewers, guideline developers, translators, library and information professionals, educators, frontline health workers, public health professionals, policymakers, patient representatives...

HIFA Country Representatives: The Country

Representative (CR) programme continues to grow, with 270 CRs in 88 countries. 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, social media, giving presentations (virtual and F2F), and radio interviews. Goran Zangana (Middle East Research Institute, Iraq) was awarded HIFA Country Representative of the Year 2022.

The CR programme is led by a team of regional coordinators (Africa, Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, Latin America, South East Asia).

HIFA Supporting Organisations: During 2022 HIFA ratified 10 new supporting organisations, making a total of 444, demonstrating the breadth of support for the HIFA vision. HIFA appointed a volunteer Supporting Organisation coordinator in September 2022.

HIFA Volunteers: More than 500 volunteers provide their time and expertise for a growing number of projects (see below), HIFA Country Representatives, 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 universal access, with leads in place for Twitter (@hifa_org), Facebook (HIFAdotORG), LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram. The team consistently promoted World Health Days, emphasising the critical role of healthcare information for each health issue.

HIFA website: HIFA worked with a pro bono consultant to prepare a redesign of the hifa.org home page (implemented in March 2022).

HIFA Projects

HIFA continued to build its portfolio of projects, working with leading health and development 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 and action. Learning is 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 and sponsor representatives with experience and expertise in the issue.

Highlights included:

Access to health research: The project is sponsored by Elsevier and supported continuing discussion on all aspects of access throughout the year.

COVID-19: This ongoing project (September 2020 - present) is exploring the information needs of health workers, policymakers, and the general public in relation to the current pandemic and prevention of future pandemics. This has supported the longest discussion in HIFA's history, with almost 1500 substantive messages exchanged to date. A thematic analysis of the discussion was published in the *Journal of Medical Internet Research* (see below). HIFA is grateful to the Global Health Academy at the University of Edinburgh and the University of Toronto, Canada, for their support.

Library and information services: HIFA continued to collaborate with the International Federation of Library Associations (special interest group Evidence for Global and Disaster Health). The SIG is now providing pro bono technical support for the HIFA-WHO Collaboration (see below).

Maintaining essential health services during COVID-19 (and beyond): In 2022 we completed the third and final thematic discussion on this topic: What have we learned? Sponsored by the Department of Integrated Health Services, WHO, Geneva. Highlights of all three discussions were published on the WHO website (see Publications below)

Learning for quality health services: Up to 8 million deaths are attributed to poor quality care each year in low- and middle-income countries, accounting for 1 in 7 deaths in these countries. The World Health Organization Global Learning Laboratory collaborated with HIFA on a series of discussions to explore issues around how to improve quality of health services at facility, district and national levels. This resulted in four publications together with a corporate news item on the WHO website (see Publications below)

Informal use of mobile phones by health workers: HIFA supported a major research project (mHEALTH-INNOVATE) involving Makerere University, Norwegian Institute of Public Health, WHO and other research partners to explore What can we learn from health workers' informal use of mobile phones? The findings were presented at a virtual meeting, with a detailed report on the HIFA website and a paper in *Oxford Open Digital Health* journal (see Publications below).

Civil society and evidence-informed policymaking: Can decision-making processes for health systems strengthening and universal health coverage be made more inclusive, responsive and accountable? HIFA supported thematic discussions as part of a major research consortium (SUPPORT-SYSTEMS) including the University of Ghana, the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), the University of Oslo, the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. (see [report](#) on HIFA website)

Communicating health research: In August 2022 HIFA launched a new project sponsored by TDR, the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases at WHO. The project builds on previous HIFA work with TDR (country-level policymaking; implementation research; systematic reviews) to explore how researchers can better communicate health research evidence to policymakers. A deep-dive discussion was held on the HIFA forums in September and October 2022, leading to the publication of outputs on the HIFA website and a news release on the TDR/WHO website.

Upcoming projects in 2023

Mental health: substance use disorders. In November 2022 HIFA launched a new project on information needs for substance use disorders. Three deep-dive discussions are planned for 2023, focusing on Tobacco, Alcohol and Opiates. The project is supported by NextGenU.org and the Ulrich and Ruth Frank Foundation for International Health.

Working groups on standby. HIFA has several working groups that are ready to deliver when funding becomes available: Citizens, parents and children; Community health workers; Evaluating impact of healthcare information; Evidence-informed policy and practice; Family planning; Health partnerships; Library and information services; Multilingualism; Newborn care; Prescribers and users of medicines; and Primary health care. Contact us for details or to discuss possibilities for a new project.

HIFA Voices 2.0

The HIFA-WHO Collaboration Plan aims to harness the collective intelligence of its members on information needs and how to meet them. The HIFA Voices 2.0 prototype has been tried and tested and is now seeking technical and financial support for implementation. Contact us for details.

Building a global health network of networks

HIFA continued to collaborate with Jhpiego and PATH to develop a network of communities of practice in global health, which now has more than 50 CoPs registered on the [LeaderNet](#) global health platform.

Publications

Gangireddy R, Chakraborty S, Pakenham-Walsh N, Nagarajan B, Krishan P, McGuire R, Vaghela G, Sriharan A. Themes Surrounding COVID-19 and Its Infodemic: Qualitative Analysis of the COVID-19 Discussion on the Multidisciplinary Healthcare Information for All Health Forum. *JMIR Infodemiology* 2022;2(1).

Frontline perspectives on enhancing commitment to quality health services: WHO and HIFA (WHO News release).

Maintaining Essential Health Services during COVID-19 (and beyond) (three publications on WHO website).

Using an online community of practice to explore the informal use of mobile phones by health workers. Glenton C et al. *Oxford Open Digital Health*, Volume 1, 2023.

HIFA-WHO Collaboration

Official relations with the World Health Organization.

In January 2022 WHO approved Global Healthcare Information Network (the UK non-profit that administers HIFA) to be a Non-State Actor in Official Relations.

Our partnership is guided by a 3-year Plan (2022-2024), which is summarised as follows:

"This plan for collaboration between WHO and GHI-net supports WHO's work towards fulfilling its constitutional mandate to extend to all peoples the benefits of medical, psychological and related knowledge and WHO's activities to ensure access to authoritative and strategic information on matters that affect peoples' health in line with the 13th General Programme of Work."

Priority areas: The plan has 5 priority areas:

- To support WHO advocacy and stakeholder engagement to achieve universal access to reliable healthcare information
- To provide WHO with access to experience and expertise on information needs and how to meet them
- To support WHO's role as a leading provider of reliable healthcare information
- To support the dissemination and uptake WHO's publications, information and public health messages
- To support WHO's role in meeting information needs in languages other than English

Implementation working group: In September 2022 a working group was established to implement the Plan, consisting of HIFA steering group and WHO representatives, and expert advisers from the HIFA membership. HIFA allocated unrestricted funds (\$2k) from its supporting organisations and personal donors.

Stakeholder consultation 2023: In 2023 the working group will focus on Activity 1:

"To identify best practices, opportunities and challenges from relevant health related stakeholders, towards pursuing universal access to reliable healthcare information"

The global stakeholder consultation will include a public online survey, thematic discussions on the HIFA forums, key informant interviews and stakeholder engagement events (including the World Library and Information Congress in August 2023 and Evidence-Based Health Care Day on 20 October 2023).

The consultation is the first of ten activities described in the HIFA-WHO Collaboration Plan, which collectively aim to build solidarity for the vision of universal access to reliable healthcare information and ultimately secure the high-level political and financial commitment required to make universal access a reality.

Help shape the future of health care worldwide! For more details and to discuss how you or your organisation can participate in and/or support this work, please contact HIFA Coordinator Dr Neil Pakenham-Walsh: neil@hifa.org

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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.

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