



HIFA2015 Evaluation Report: Response from Global Healthcare Information Network and HIFA2015 Steering Group

We welcome this Report. We find it valuable and we are already starting to act on its Conclusions and Recommendations.

The current position of HIFA2015 is succinctly described by the Report: “HIFA2015 achieves an extraordinary level of activity on minimal resources from which many people around the world benefit. It has significantly punched above its weight. However its ultimate success will depend on external funders providing additional funding, and of course continued effective use of these, if it is to achieve its ambitious plans.”

The Report shows that HIFA2015 is an important initiative that is highly valued by its members. It also emphasises that the three pillars of the strategy (Forums; Knowledge Base; Advocacy Programme) have only been partially implemented due to lack of resources. Specifically, funding has allowed for only one staff member, whereas we have recognised since 2006 that this initiative requires three staff members.

The Report demonstrates that a great deal has been achieved, but that there is much further work to be done to build on this. In particular:

1. Expansion of HIFA Forums to include underserved geographical areas (the Report highlights South Asia - we would add Central Asia, Eastern Europe, French-speaking African countries, North Africa/Eastern Mediterranean, and Latin America) and underrepresented groups (the Report rightly highlights community health workers). This is challenging but achievable and can be provided through our model of HIFA Global Networks - we already have two collaborations with the World Health Organization on our sister forums, HIFA-Portuguese and HIFA-EVIPNet- French, and a new country-focused collaboration (HIFA-Zambia) with the Zambia UK Health Workforce Alliance. Further development of these forums into other languages and countries will require additional resources.
2. Development and re-launch of the 2nd pillar of the strategy, the HIFA2015 Knowledge Base, based on HIFA-Lumps. With thanks to Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services and WHO, this is well under way. We have the database prototype and the first 400 HIFA-Lumps have been identified, tagged and collated. Financial support is needed to develop this further.

3. Further development of the 3rd pillar of the strategy, the HIFA2015 Advocacy Programme. As the Report points out, we have made some progress here, but again our reach has been constrained by lack of resources. Most notably, we have defined in collaboration with the New York Law School the legal case for Access to Health Information under International Human Rights Law, and specifically we have demonstrated for the first time the legal obligation of governments to meet the healthcare information needs of their health workforce and their citizens. The Report points out that our advocacy programme requires further development, which in turn requires increased resources.

Without additional funding, we shall not be able to act on the main findings of this Evaluation Report and indeed we shall have to scale back on our activities. This will frustrate and disappoint many thousands of members and supporting organisations who can see the potential of HIFA2015.

This evaluation will help us to improve our work and we also hope that it will encourage others to join us and work with us. HIFA2015 already involves individuals from more than 2000 organisations worldwide with an interest in the production, exchange and use of healthcare knowledge. The more we can learn from one another, the greater our potential impact on global health.

We shall continue to strive to secure financial and in-kind support, to build our technical and organisational capacity, to improve our work and services, to harness the experience and expertise of our members and supporting organisations, and thereby progressively to realise our common vision: a world where people are no longer dying for lack of healthcare knowledge.

It is said that our goal is ambitious, but more and more people recognise that such goals can be achieved if all stakeholders work together. As we learn and improve our services to global health, we trust that we shall demonstrate that it is indeed possible to bring together many thousands of stakeholders around specific, yet complex, international health and development goals. HIFA2015 is a microcosm of what could be achieved over the coming years. Inclusive, multiprofessional communication frameworks will play an increasingly important role in shaping our common future, not only in global health but in all areas of international development.

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CHILD2015 - International Child Health Group (Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health)
HIFA-Portuguese - ePORTUGUESE Network, WHO, Geneva
HIFA-EVIPNet-French - Evidence for Informed Policy Network, WHO, Geneva
HIFA-Zambia - Zambia UK Health Workforce Alliance.

Global Healthcare Information Network
HIFA2015 Steering Group
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