HIFA Strategy 2022-2024
Accelerating progress towards universal access to reliable healthcare information

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Strategic shifts

Our priorities in the coming period are to:

1. Convene key stakeholders to accelerate progress towards universal access to reliable healthcare information

2. Further strengthen our ongoing collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO);

3. Promote access to reliable healthcare information and global health communication in languages other than English

4. Strengthen the depth and breadth of our work through a comprehensive range of donor-supported projects;

5. Harness collective intelligence through the new HIFA Voices 2.0 database;

6. Strengthen our advocacy, including creation of an online advocacy toolkit for all to use;

7. Include an explicit focus on protecting people from misinformation.

Vision and mission

HIFA is a global human-rights-based movement that is committed to the reduction of avoidable death and suffering by working towards the vision of 'a world where every person has access to reliable healthcare information and is protected from misinformation'. HIFA's mission is to bring together all stakeholders to promote communication, understanding and advocacy to accelerate progress towards universal access to reliable healthcare information, in a spirit of solidarity and co-development.
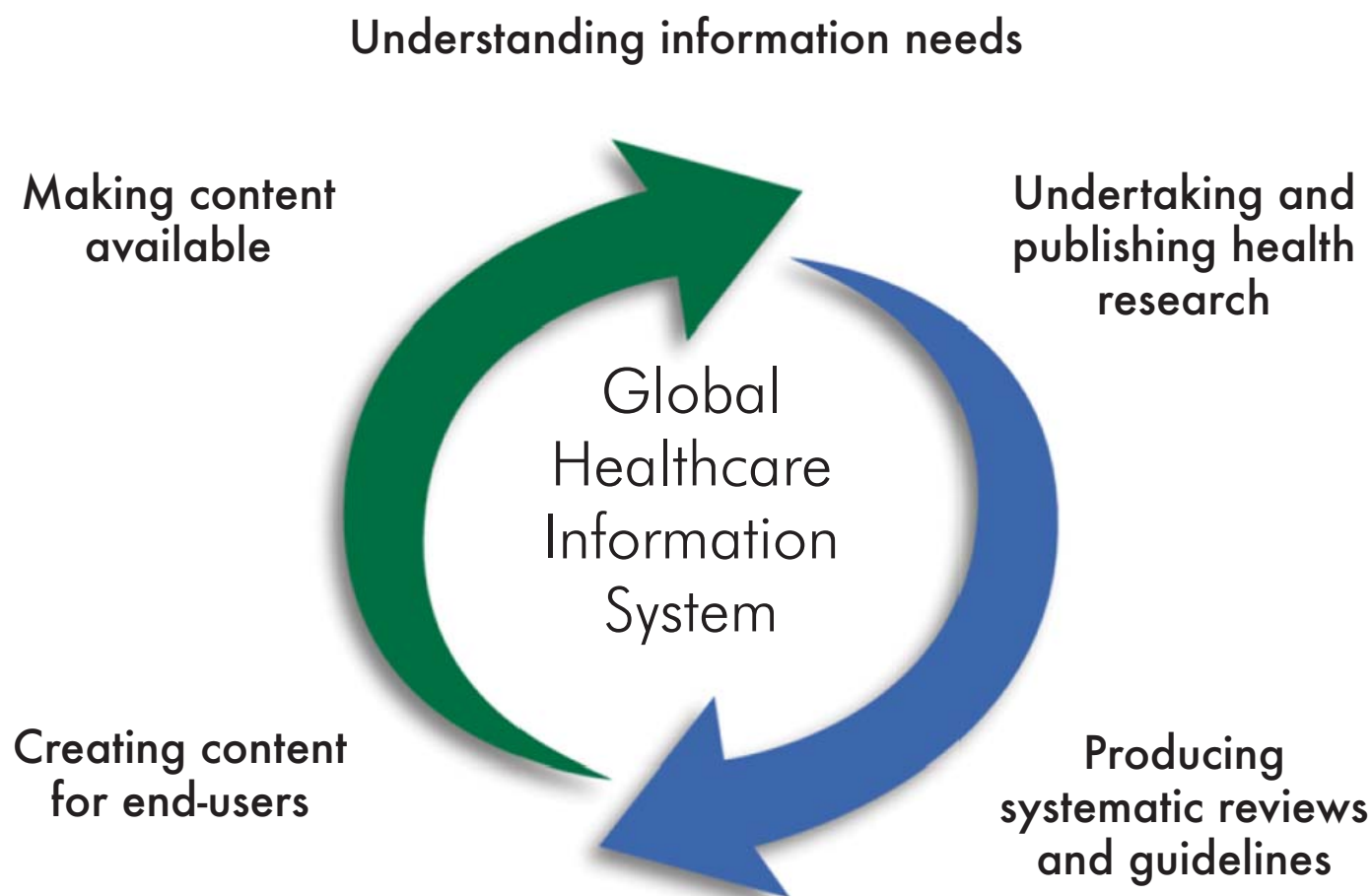
The challenge

To improve the availability and use of reliable healthcare information and thereby reduce avoidable death and suffering. Everybody needs reliable healthcare information, including families and caregivers, health workers, media and communications professionals, public health professionals and policymakers. Failure to access and apply reliable healthcare information is a leading cause of preventable death and suffering worldwide. Everyone has unmet healthcare information needs, which are highly contextual: they change from moment to moment. These unmet needs are especially pronounced in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and among those who are marginalised in the global population. Basic life-saving interventions are very often locally available, but not provided in time because of poor access to reliable information.

Rationale and approach

A 2004 paper in *The Lancet* by Fiona Godlee, Neil Pakenham-Walsh and others argued that lack of reliable healthcare information is due to a dysfunctional global healthcare information system (GHIS, below). The paper proposed a new global initiative to address three fundamental weaknesses of the GHIS: poor communication across the system; poor understanding of drivers and barriers in the system; and poor advocacy for healthcare information as a neglected global health challenge. HIFA was subsequently launched in 2006.
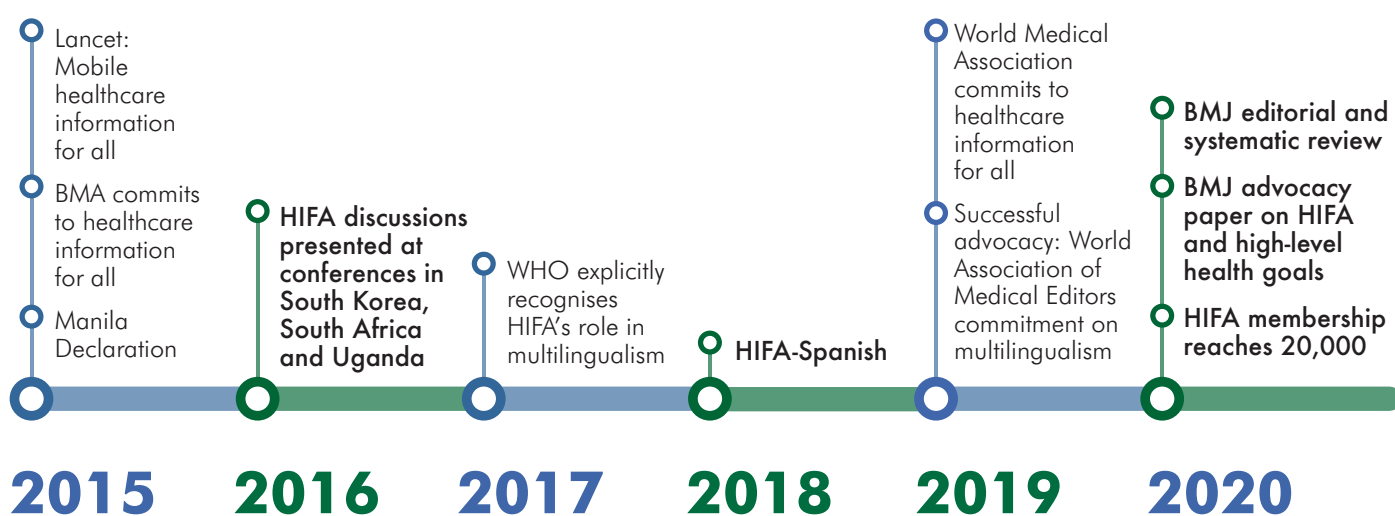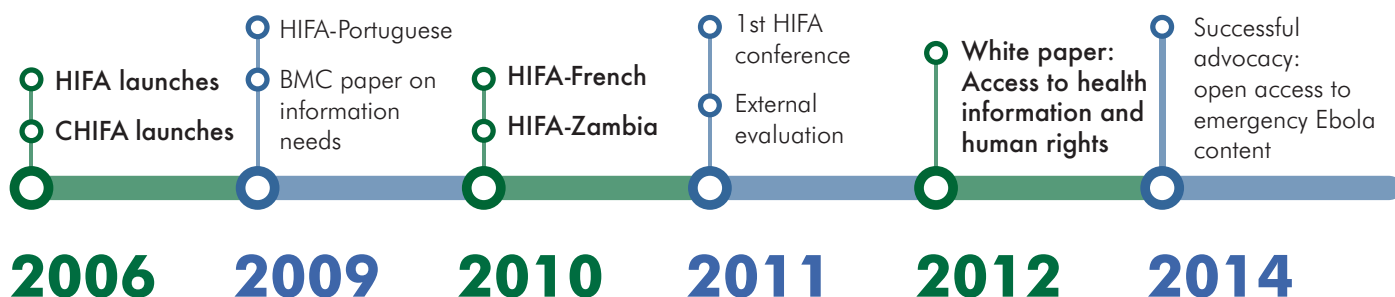
The Global Healthcare Information System

Understanding information needs

Making content
available

Undertaking and
publishing health
research

Global
Healthcare
Information
System

Creating content
for end-users

Producing
systematic reviews
and guidelines

History and achievements

Since 2006 HIFA has grown to more than 20,000 professional members from 180 countries representing every part of the Global Healthcare Information System: frontline health professionals, patients, general public, policymakers, researchers, publishers, systematic reviewers, guideline developers, producers of reference and learning materials, journalists, social scientists, library and information professionals (among others). HIFA members share experience and expertise around how to improve the availability and use of reliable healthcare information on six global forums in four languages (English, French, Portuguese and Spanish). They represent thousands of organisations around the world, of which more than 400 have officially endorsed the HIFA vision.

HIFA's milestones

2006
- HIFA launches
- CHIFA launches

2009
- HIFA-Portuguese
- BMC paper on information needs

2010
- HIFA-French
- HIFA-Zambia

2011
- 1st HIFA conference
- External evaluation

2012
- White paper: Access to health information and human rights

2014
- Successful advocacy: open access to emergency Ebola content

2015
- Lancet: Mobile healthcare information for all
- BMA commits to healthcare information for all
- Manila Declaration

2016
- HIFA discussions presented at conferences in South Korea, South Africa and Uganda

2017
- WHO explicitly recognises HIFA's role in multilingualism

2018
- HIFA-Spanish

2019
- World Medical Association commits to healthcare information for all
- Successful advocacy: World Association of Medical Editors commitment on multilingualism

2020
- BMJ editorial and systematic review
- BMJ advocacy paper on HIFA and high-level health goals
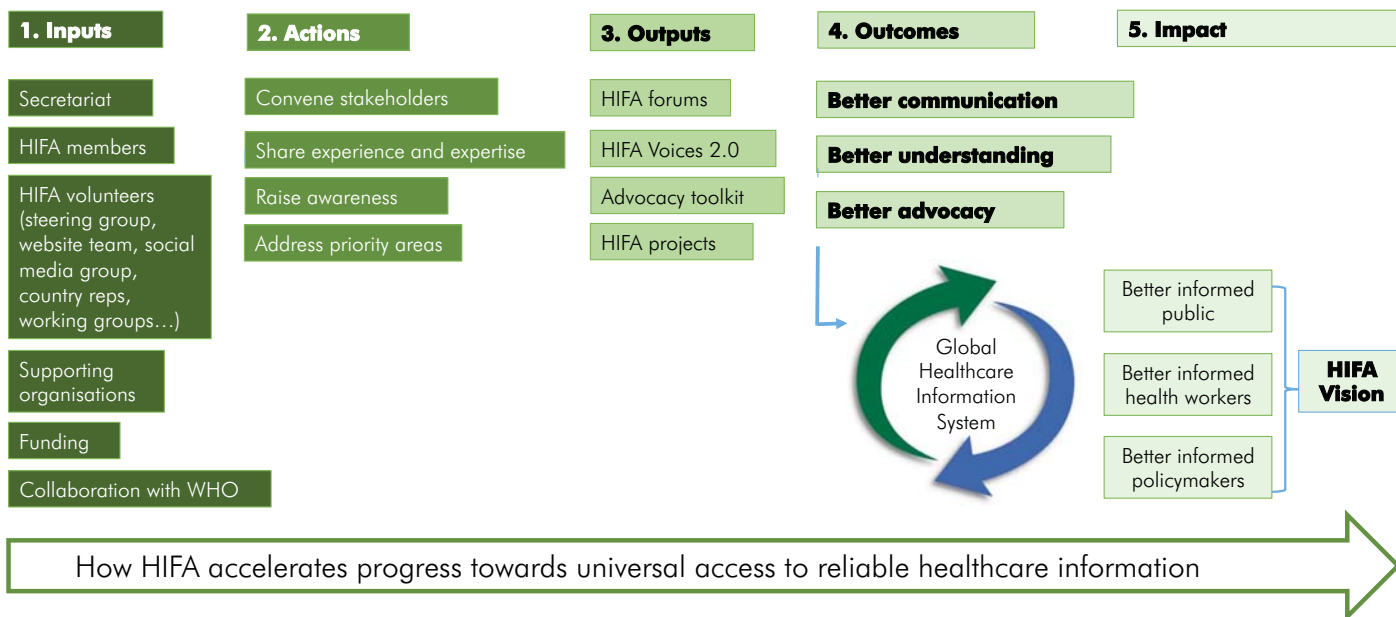- HIFA membership reaches 20,000

The opportunity for transformative change

In 2020-2021 the COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the urgent need for reliable healthcare information and protection from misinformation. Now more than ever HIFA has **the opportunity and the enabling environment** to accelerate progress towards the HIFA vision building upon: (i) HIFA's extensive history of achievements; (ii) a growing global social movement; (iii) a solid and growing collaboration with WHO; (iv) unprecedented public awareness of the importance of reliable information and the dangers of misinformation; (v) increasing recognition of the role of information in universal health coverag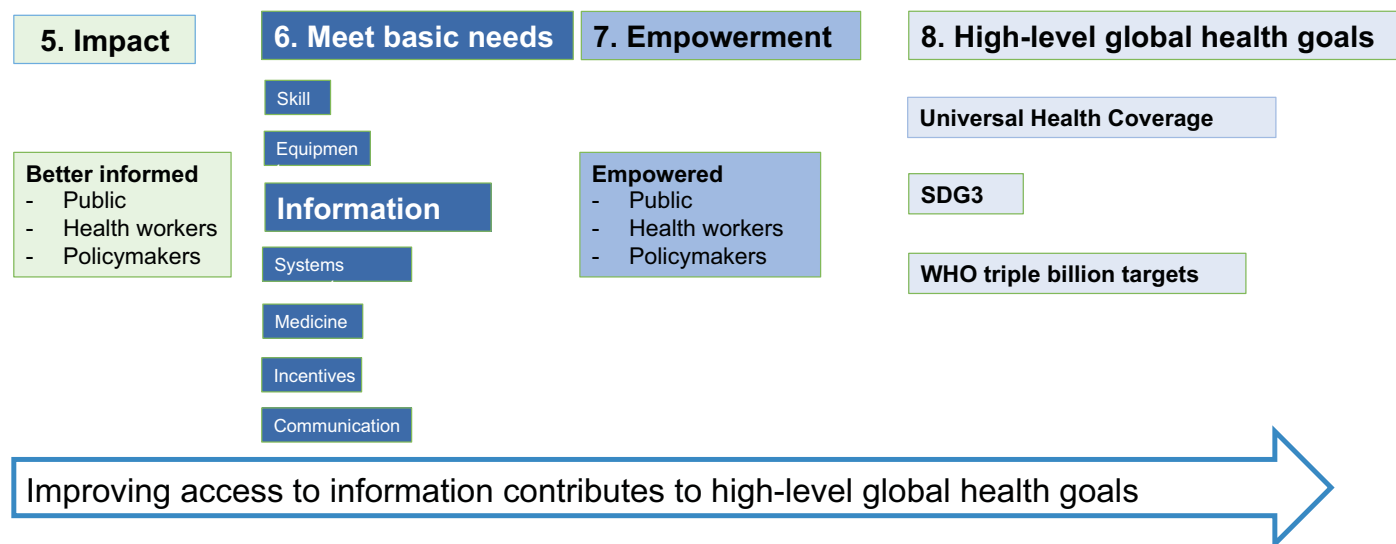e (UHC), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and human rights; (vi) the World Medical Association Statement on Healthcare Information For All (2019) and (vii) emerging recognition of the need for environmentally sustainable models of global health communication (as exemplified by the HIFA forums).

HIFA uses a **Theory of Change** (next page) to show how HIFA's inputs, activities and outputs translate into outcomes and impact, thereby driving progress towards universal access to reliable healthcare information.

The opportunity for transformative change

1. Inputs	2. Actions	3. Outputs	4. Outcomes	5. Impact

1. Inputs
- Secretariat
- HIFA members
- HIFA volunteers (steering group, website team, social media group, country reps, working groups…)
- Supporting organisations
- Funding
- Collaboration with WHO

2. Actions
- Convene stakeholders
- Share experience and expertise
- Raise awareness
- Address priority areas

3. Outputs
- HIFA forums
- HIFA Voices 2.0
- Advocacy toolkit
- HIFA projects

4. Outcomes
- Better communication
- Better understanding
- Better advocacy

Global Healthcare Information System

- Better informed public
- Better informed health workers
- Better informed policymakers

HIFA Vision

How HIFA accelerates progress towards universal access to reliable healthcare information

The impact of HIFA contributes to meeting basic needs, empowerment of people and health workers, and achievement of high-level global health goals:

5. Impact	6. Meet basic needs	7. Empowerment	8. High-level global health goals

Better informed
- Public
- Health workers
- Policymakers

6. Meet basic needs
- Skill
- Equipmen
- **Information**
- Systems
- Medicine
- Incentives
- Communication

Empowered
- Public
- Health workers
- Policymakers

8. High-level global health goals
- Universal Health Coverage
- SDG3
- WHO triple billion targets

Improving access to information contributes to high-level global health goals

Throughout, HIFA will **measure and evaluate value creation** across several domains, using quantitative and qualitative indicators, including value for individual HIFA members, for HIFA volunteers and for participating organisations. Methods of evaluation will include statistics regarding members and forum messages, surveys, interviews and testimonials.

Conclusion

To achieve this transformative agenda, there is a pressing need to **build the capacity of the HIFA Secretariat**. The work of HIFA is constrained by lack of staff capacity: HIFA has only one professional staff member, supporting a dynamic network of hundreds of volunteers. The priority for 2022-2024 is to engage at least one more professional staff member. To do this HIFA needs to double its annual income from £50,000 to £100,000.

This 2022-2024 Strategy informs HIFA's annual Operational Plans and budgets. HIFA is actively seeking funding and collaboration to support all areas of work and looks forward to working with all partners to accelerate progress towards a world where every person has access to the healthcare information they need to protect their own health and the health of others, and is protected from misinformation.

For further information and/or to discuss opportunities for collaboration please contact Dr Neil Pakenham-Walsh, HIFA Coordinator. **neil@hifa.org**

How you or your organisation can help…

- **Make a donation:** www.hifa.org/appeal

- **Sponsor a project:** www.hifa.org/projects

- **Collaborate with us:** www.hifa.org/collaborate

- **Join HIFA today:** www.hifa.org/joinhifa

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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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