

‘Healthcare Information For All by 2015’

Tens of thousands of people die every day from common childhood diseases, malaria, AIDS, tuberculosis, and complications of pregnancy and childbirth. The vast majority die at home, or at a primary or district healthcare facility. A major factor in these deaths is that the parent, carer, or health worker simply did not know what to do and when to seek help. Lack of access to relevant, reliable information and learning opportunities is consistently identified as a major cause of poor quality care.

In order to deliver effective care, a healthcare provider requires adequate skills, equipment, information, structural support, medicines, incentives and communication facilities (**Fig 1**).



Figure 1. Healthcare providers have several interrelated needs: skills, equipment, information, infrastructure, medicines, incentives, and communication facilities.

HIFA2015 will focus on meeting the healthcare **information** needs of healthcare providers, especially those working at the levels of household and primary and district care facilities.

The creation, exchange and use of healthcare information is dependent on a multistakeholder system operating at international, national and local levels, and involving healthcare providers, information professionals, publishers, researchers, policymakers and others. Our current understanding of the system - what works and what doesn't, and why - is rudimentary (**Fig 2**), and the system remains uncoordinated, dysfunctional and ineffective.

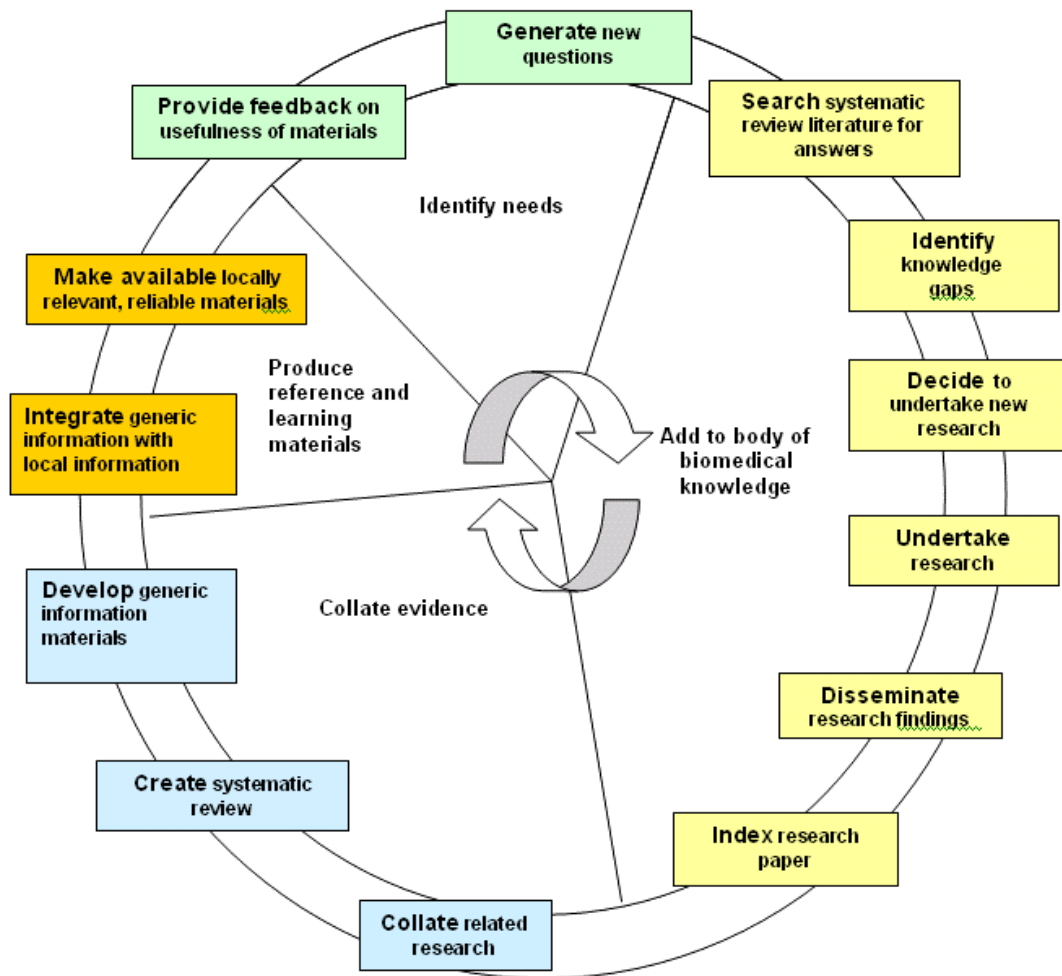


Figure 2: Healthcare providers require information that is evidence-based and relevant to their needs. Such information can only be made available if there is integration of processes at global, national and local levels within a cyclical system providing feedback. (Adapted from Godlee *et al* 2004)

Why a campaign?

The vision of 'Health information for all by 2015' was first articulated in a paper in *The Lancet* in 2004¹. Since 2004, activities remain uncoordinated, with continued lack of understanding and underinvestment - and continued loss of life. We therefore call on international, national and local organisations to work together towards a future where every person has access to an informed healthcare provider.

¹ Fiona Godlee *et al*. Can we achieve health information for all by 2015? *Lancet* 2004;364:295-300. <http://image.thelancet.com/extras/04art6112web.pdf>

Defining our goal

As a starting point, the current working title of the Campaign is 'Healthcare Information For All by 2015', and its current strapline is 'Working for a future where every person has access to an informed healthcare provider'.

A more modest specific goal has also been suggested, which can (arguably) be measured very easily and at low cost: 'By 2015, the availability of relevant, reliable healthcare information will no longer be considered a major barrier to the delivery of effective healthcare.'

The specific goal of HIFA2015 needs to be defined and agreed among stakeholders. The goal needs to be strategic, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

How would the campaign work?

We propose the following approach (**Fig 3**):

1. Communication: Promoting international, regional and national cooperation

HIFA2015 will bring together healthcare providers, producers of health reference and learning materials, librarians and information professionals, health researchers, policymakers, development workers and the general public. We will facilitate, manage, and/or participate in leading eFora and face-to-face meetings that explore issues around the availability of healthcare information in developing countries.

2. Understanding: Building a picture of information needs and how to meet them

HIFA2015 will harness knowledge and expertise to create a web-based Knowledge Base specifically about information needs and different methods to meet those needs. Throughout there will be an emphasis on promoting and harnessing feedback from stakeholders. The knowledge gained will provide the evidence base to improve availability and use of healthcare information in the developing world.

3. Effective action: Seeking and advocating cost-effective solutions

HIFA2015 will identify evidence-based solutions to address the information and learning needs of healthcare providers, and promote the political and financial commitment needed to support information and learning initiatives worldwide.

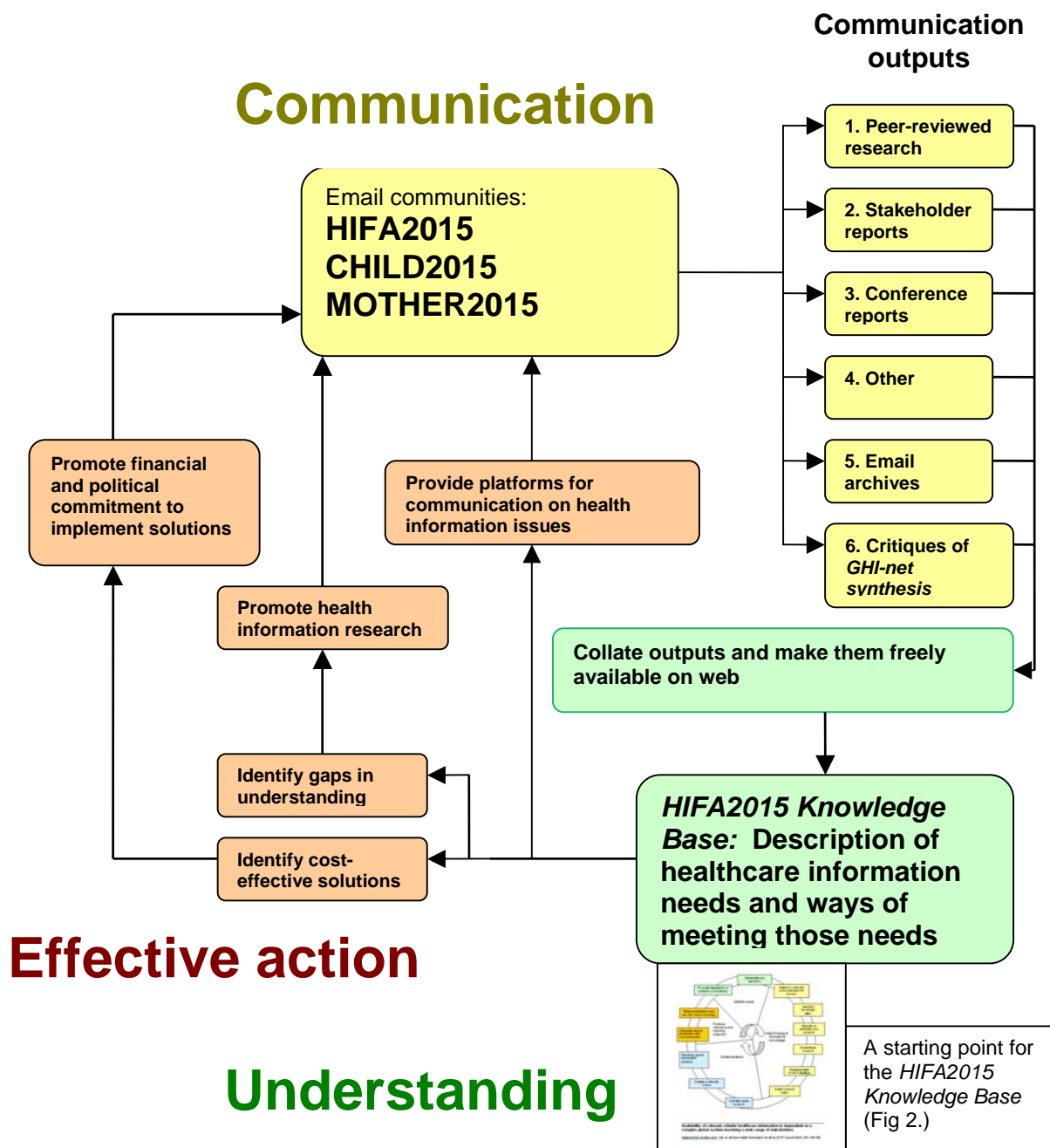


Figure 3. Improvement of the current system requires Communication and Understanding about information needs and ways of meeting those needs. GHI-net and its collaborating partners will promote Communication and Understanding, providing the evidence base needed to underpin the HIFA2015 Campaign. Three email discussion groups - HIFA2015, CHILD2015, and MOTHER2015 - focus on generic, child and maternal health issues, respectively.

We look forward to working with you towards a future where every person has access to an informed healthcare provider.

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