Annual Report
2020-2021

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INTRODUCTION

Another year has passed with the COVID-19 pandemic which has disrupted our everyday lives and radically altered the political landscape. While we continue to struggle with the challenges and look towards an uncertain future to overcome this unprecedented crisis we trust there lies an opportunity for renewal and rebirth.

Health is having a rare moment in the political spotlight: now is the time to fight for solidarity, equity and transformation in health promotion and well-being on the global stage.

Connecting through digital sessions, knowledge exchange and networking help us conceptualise how we can rise from this crisis as more resilient, smarter, and more equitable societies of well-being.

Health promotion must be one of the drivers to help create a better future – especially for the next generation. This is even more so as the COVID-19 pandemic and impacts of the climate crisis have reinforced existing inequalities, destroyed livelihoods, pushed people into poverty and increased many health problems.

COVID-19 has significantly impacted our micro-environment in international Geneva and presented a range of challenges to our operational capacity forcing us to close, scale back, adapt our programmes and change radically our way of working. All this put a heavy burden on our small team of volunteers and interns.

Although transitioning to online platforms increased outreach and participation, this greater reliance on digital connectivity came with a cost: a lower impact and capacity to influence. The lack of in-person meetings and conferences in Geneva entailed a drop in attraction and revenues in the case of the Alliance.

According to a survey of Geneva-State NGO Service and the UN Office in Geneva the future role of NGOs in International Geneva seems to depend on (a) how governmental donors will react and arbitrate between the various public policy priorities in the coming years (the fear of public budget crisis impact on NGO funding being high) and (b) on how other actors (mainly the UN System) will adapt to the “new normal” and engage with their civil society partners in the near future.
The Vision of the Alliance relies on the aspiration to see empowered individuals and communities equipped with ownership of knowledge and the means to better control their health and fully enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

The Mission focuses on connecting and catalysing Civil Society Organisations, advocating for a holistic approach to health and bridging the gap between international declarations and local realities.

The Alliance is using the following tools to achieve the above mission and its strategic objectives by:

- Knowledge sharing
- Advocacy
- Awareness training
- Networking
- Partnership building

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

10th Global Forum on Health Promotion
22 October 2020
“Global Health in a Changing Climate”

The 10th edition of the Global Forum on Health Promotion was a virtual meeting hosted by the Canadian Society for International Health (CSIH) and our member organisation Health Nexus. It was incorporated into the four-day programme of the 26th Canadian Conference on Global Health (CCGH) held 19-22 October 2020.

More than 1,000 participants from 67 countries attended the virtual event and out of them 70% from developing countries and a huge number of students which would not have been possible if travel costs had been involved.

The Alliance was honoured to welcome the video message of WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus recognising the value of civil society experiences from the ground channeled through an appropriate coordination mechanisms to the global level. The exclusive interview with Ilona Kickbusch during the Conference provided an insight into the global perspectives for Health Promotion.

The three sessions of the Forum, described in the previous Annual Report addressed the following themes:

- “Organising Civil Society for Impactful Health Promotion”,
- “Opportunities for Digital Innovation in Population Health”, and
- “Health Promotion and Social Determinants of Health Equity in the COVID-19 times”.
The Key messages of the 10GFHP have been transmitted to WHO as a contribution to the Global Action Plan on Health Promotion.

The recordings of the 10GFHP are available on the Alliance’s YouTube channel.

The Alliance offered a one-year free membership to all participants attending the 10GFHP and 26CCGH. After the event a follow-up survey was sent out to all new members in order to learn more about the new members and get them involved in a mutually beneficial partnership. More than 200 responses have been received with valuable new information and feedback on the Global Forum.

The Global Forum organised in collaboration with WHO has become a core event held annually since 2011 and provides a platform for key stakeholders from NGOs, governments and private sector, to address current challenges and opportunities of Health Promotion. Additionally, it sets the agenda for research, advocacy and action. It is a platform intended for everyone involved in promoting healthy lives, to share experiences, to learn from one another and to build understanding of best practices.

Members’ Networking Meeting
15 April 2021
“The world belongs to those who make connections”

Following the very successful 10th Global Forum on Health Promotion this was the first opportunity for the extended membership recruited at the 10GFHP to gather again virtually and exchange on how they can contribute with actions to support the stronger positioning of health promotion and well-being during the pandemic.

Purpose of the meeting was to:
• provide an opportunity for the Alliance members to interact and network,
• be briefed about the big issues on the Global Health Agenda,
• benefit from listening to the members, learning more about their priorities, what is important for them, how the Alliance can help,
• identify what NGOs need to get more actively involved in joint activities making more impact through developing joint statements or contributing to policy papers or others,
• generate material for effective participation at upcoming international meetings,
• contribute to achieving the strategic objective “One billion more people enjoying better health and wellbeing”.

Dr Naoko Yamamoto, WHO Assistant Director-General for Healthier Populations and Universal Health Coverage made some introductory remarks. Dr Ruediger Krech , WHO Director of the Health Promotion Department talked about the big issues on the global health agenda. He highlighted the financial and legal needs and support for health promotion in order to guide and reform the future beyond COVID-19. As we realised, health is a result of the intricate interaction of multiple components in our lives. It is not only SDG 3 on health but all of the SDGs which should be taken into consideration for a balanced and equitable development.
Dr Mihály Kökény, Lecturer, Former Minister of Health, A4HP Policy Advisor commented on the WHO introductory speeches. Gabriella Sozanski, Board Member and General Secretary of A4HP presented the Alliance for Health Promotion in a snapshot including headlines from the 10th Global Forum on Health Promotion.

A lively dialogue and interaction developed during the meeting between the WHO senior management and new and old members of the Alliance from across the world. The presentations are available on the Alliance’s website.

The “Health Promotion in School” project was introduced by Katerina Firlova, Manager Strategic Partnerships and Operations, Health Nexus, Toronto, Canada. Dr Faten Ben Abdelaziz, from WHO Enhanced Wellbeing Unit, the Designated Technical Officer (DTO) of the Alliance showed great interest in the School Project and proposed a follow-up meeting which took place with the participation of the representatives of Health Nexus and Education and Solidarity Network. WHO Health Promotion Department was interested in considering the School Project as a model and in scaling up and developing it into intergenerational platforms.

ADVOCACY

World Health Organization and Civil Society

Concept for Informal meetings for Member States, non-State actors and WHO Secretariat leading to the World Health Assembly

The Alliance for Health Promotion as a non-State actor (NSA) in official relation with WHO is entitled to attend the WHO governing bodies meetings as observers and make statements on technical topics, at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting. However, the number of NSA interested in proceedings of the WHO Governing Bodies and wishing to make statements has increased substantially in recent years. The possibility of addressing WHO’s governing bodies after Member State representatives have taken the floor on a given topic does not result in a meaningful engagement, and has little impact on the content or direction of the debate. In order to improve this situation it was proposed to organise a virtual informal meeting for interested NSA well before the WHA to allow them to preliminarily organise themselves for making constituency statements at the World Health Assembly on selected agenda items.

As a consequence of the first trial meeting held on 20-23 April the Alliance was able to develop and present a statement with the International Association of Patients’ Organizations (IAPO) and AMREF Health Africa to WHA74 in May 2021. The statement concerned Agenda item 17 WHO’s work in health emergencies and strengthening preparedness for health emergencies. While supporting a rights- and equity-based pandemic treaty which is vital for health security the statement
emphasised the need for securing the right to health itself and referred to a Framework Convention on Global Health (FCGH) based in the right to health and aimed at national and global health equity, that would do just that relying on advocacy for the value of health promotion tools in its development.

WHO Director General and Civil Society Dialogue

The WHO launched an interactive dialogue series with the Director General (DG) and Civil Society. One of the dialogues on 2 October 2020 addressed the theme "Promoting the health and wellbeing of young people during the COVID-19 pandemic: Leveraging youth engagement in participatory governance". The DG discussed with representatives of civil society organisations how youth can be actively integrated in decision-making and not just represent a token. The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA), an Alliance Board member, was one of the speakers.

UNITED NATIONS ECOSOC
High-level Political Forum 2021, New York City, 6-15 July

The Alliance being in Consultative Status with ECOSOC (UN Economic and Social Committee) was invited to submit a written statement to the ECOSOC session in July. One proposal has been received from our members supporting the relevance of a right to health approach and the urgency of a Framework Convention on Global Health in close relation with the Pandemic Treaty. We argued for a FCGH which would create a safer world for all – and would be invaluable for accelerating progress towards the SDGs and tackling one of the world’s greatest moral crises – the unconscionable inequities within and between countries.

The high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) is the core United Nations platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The HLPF discussed ways to ensure a sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19 that puts us on track to realise the 2030 Agenda. The theme was "Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development".

The HLPF in 2021 discussed Sustainable Development Goals 1 on no poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 3 on good health and well-being, 8 on decent work and economic growth, 10 on reduced inequalities, 12 on responsible consumption and production, 13 on climate action, 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and 17 on partnerships in depth. The Forum also considered the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Sustainable Development Goals.
The Alliance Sponsoring UN CSW65 Side Event  
New York City, 24 March 2021

Mothers Legacy Project, a member of the Alliance, was the main organiser of a panel held during the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) session entitled "STEM for Women’s Empowerment". The objective of the virtual event was to raise awareness about the power of Science and Technology (STEM) as a key driver in today’s economies and as twin pillars of progress in knowledge and quality of life. The session argued for women to have equal access to and benefit from both of them.

The gaps must be bridged if women are to contribute and benefit equally from the potential of science and technology and participate meaningfully in a global knowledge society, to maintain families out of poverty and provide educational benefits to the next generation. STEM is necessary to improve education, eradicate poverty, prevent exodus from rural communities, fight diseases, and respond to the challenges of global health and climate change.

With COVID-19 pandemic, ICT technologies have come into their own by allowing communication and collaboration both remotely and globally, not only giving voice but also active participation in discussion such as this panel and allowing all perspectives to be heard, leaving nobody behind and outlining challenges as well as proposing solutions which are effective locally.

AWARENESS TRAINING

Regional Workshop in Bangalore, India  
This year’s Annual Continuing Medical Education Programme of the Lakeside Education Trust and the Lakeside Center for Health Promotion organised with the support of the Alliance for Health Promotion was held virtually on 26 July 2021. The fact that the event was online enabled the participation of many more people who otherwise would not have had this opportunity.

Regional Workshop in Kitale, Kenya  
Held annually since 2012 had to be cancelled due to the difficulties caused by the pandemic.

NETWORKING

During this reporting period we have had substantially less opportunity for traditional networking provided at big gatherings of WHO or other conferences. We were not able to hold one of our annual core events, the NGO Consultation during the WHO
Executive Board meeting in January and the annual Briefing during the World Health Assembly, either.

Digital networking has taken the place of in-person meetings which is not the same but you can do that efficiently if you are able to change your mindset and learn new technologies. One example was the virtual Members’ Networking Meeting held in April. All this requires flexibility and another approach. Virtual coffee breaks or lunchbreaks do not provide us the same possibility as having conversations around the white table. The world has changed enormously. Our lifestyle had to be adjusted to these changes.

PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

Work Collaboration with the World Health Organization, WHO

The Alliance was granted official relations (OR) with WHO in 2015. The relationship with NGOs in OR are governed by the Framework of Engagement with non-State actors (NSA) according to which the requirement is to develop a 3-year workplan for collaboration with agreed objectives. Apart from an annual report, more comprehensive evaluation is done after every 3 years.

The 148th session of the WHO Executive Board in January 2021 expressed its appreciation of the past 3-year work collaboration and extended the Official Relations of the Alliance for another three years. The letter signed by the Director of the WHO Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics confirmed the EB decision and the name of the WHO Designated Technical Officer (DTO) Dr Faten Ben Abdelaziz, head of the Enhanced Wellbeing Unit within the Health Promotion Department as well as the name of the Alliance’s Focal Point, Gabriella Sozanski.

The activities in the renewed work collaboration for the period 2021-2023 have been structured in accordance with the WHO 13th General Programme of Work (GPW13) and Programme budget. The agreed activities are expected to contribute to achieving the outcome targets set in GPW13. More specifically the Alliance will contribute to the Strategic priority 3: One billion more people enjoying better health and well-being. The activities will address the determinants of health, multi-sectoral actions and healthy settings within the framework of Health in All Policies. The two strategic areas where collaboration is expected to focus are health literacy and health-promoting schools. It needs to be said that no financial support has been allocated for the implementation of this collaboration.

The proposal of the Alliance sent to the Health Promotion Department in February about the concrete areas of work collaboration contained the following 10 points:

1. “Health Promotion in Pandemics – Awareness training for school” – a project subsidised by the State of Geneva. Target beneficiaries: Geneva high-schools
2. Health Promoting schools in Kenya, Nigeria and Cameroon
3. Champions of Health Promotion Campaign
4. Report from the 10th Global Forum on Health Promotion
5. WHO-Civil Society coordination mechanism on Health Promotion and Wellbeing - an initiative strongly supported by Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General
6. Health Literacy training workshops
7. Contribution to Global Action Plan on Health Promotion and Well-being
8. 10th Global Conference on Health Promotion
9. Project development on Maternal- Child and Reproductive Health, including Early Childhood Development
10. Project development on Innovation – mHealth (health through mobile technologies) and digital health promotion

WHO-Civil Society Working Group on Climate and Health (WHO-CSWG C&H)

As a founding member of the WHO-CSWG on Climate and Health we continued participating at the meetings, provided input and emphasised the need of a holistic approach to health applying health promotion tools. The recent discussions focused on the WG priority of making COP26 the “Health COP”. The Alliance contributed to the COP26 Special Report on Climate Change and Health: The Health Argument for Climate Action which was launched 11 October.

The report spells out the global health community's prescription for climate action, and co-developed a set of priority actions from the global health community to governments and policy makers, calling on them to act with urgency on the current climate and health crises.

COP26 in Glasgow is the first UN global climate summit since the start of the pandemic, and with health dominating the political agenda there is a clear opportunity for the voices of health professionals around the world to make a difference in these negotiations.

WHO/UNESCO Health Promoting Schools Initiative

"To make all schools a health promoting school" is the slogan of the initiative jointly developed by WHO and UNESCO. A webinar held on 16 February introduced the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) initiative and gave an overview of two documents published, the “Global Standards and Indicators” and the “Implementation guidance”. During the webinar, the case of Botswana as an early adopter country was presented. The HPS initiative and the guidelines will provide a framework for the Alliance to develop projects along with global standards.
WHO Governing Body meetings

The Alliance was represented at the 148th Executive Board meeting in January 2021 which was held virtually. It was not possible to hold our annual NGO Consultation.

The 74th World Health Assembly (WHA74) took place also virtually from 24 May to 1 June 2021. The main theme was "Ending this pandemic, preventing the next: building together a healthier, safer and fairer world".

More than 30 resolutions were adopted including: non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and social determinants of health.

Member States agreed to meet in November for a special session of the World Health Assembly, to consider developing a WHO global agreement on preparedness for and response to health emergencies.

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Swiss National Conference on Health Promotion

Representatives of the Alliance followed the 22nd National Conference on Health Promotion which took place virtually and was exempt from a participation fee. The theme was “The Coronavirus and Health Promotion: Insights for the future”.

One of the panels discussed the results of a Delphi study looking at health promotion and prevention during a pandemic. The study was carried out by Unisanté, the Centre Universitaire de Médecine Générale and Santé Publique, and their partners. The researchers determined that it is particularly important to reach out to the elderly and more vulnerable people as well as coordinate actions more efficiently between different actors and factors.

Smart Access to Health for All (SAHFA)

SAHFA is one of our partner associations engaged in promoting access to health for all through smart technologies. Currently their main project is called 'JamboMama!' which aims to reduce health risks for pregnant women in isolated communities in West Tanzania and improve pregnancy outcomes for both mothers and infants. This is done by providing ICT tools such as a smartphone with an application designed for that purpose.

Community Action Nepal (CAN)

CAN is another organisation which is seeking partnership with the Alliance. They currently operate predominantly in Gorkha district (Trans-Himalayan zone in the North-West Nepal) where they provide primary health care and maternity services and their staff also visits schools and attends mothers’ group meetings to promote hygiene and general health promotion.
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

School Project / Youth Project

In collaboration with its members, Health Nexus and the Education and Solidarity Network the Alliance has developed a funding proposal “Health Promotion in Pandemics – Awareness Training for School” targeting Geneva schools and youth.

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically transformed our existence over the past year. It is evident that youths have been particularly affected in their daily lives and their mental health by the restrictions brought by the situation. Improving preparedness and resilience of individuals to epidemics risks and health crises from a young age has now become a global priority. This project aims to demonstrate that raising awareness to health promotion is a sustainable and cost-effective solution for a healthier future. The project identifies relevant health promotion themes through surveys disseminated to schools, youths and international experts to define the current gaps and needs for improvement.

The core of the project consists of a webinar that took place on 4 November 2021. The objective of the webinar was to provide a platform for Geneva youth to meet their peers from other countries all over the world and connect with international experts with the aim to learn about health promotion, well-being and resilience.

The project has received the financial support of the State of Geneva for the year 2021. Learning from the experiences we plan to carry on with the youth project and do further fundraising in order to scale up the project and reach out to schools in low- and middle-income countries.

A concept of a funding proposal for health promoting schools in Nigeria and Kenya has been developed with the help of IPSF interns.

Champions of Health Promotion

Inspired to take advantage of the newly enlarged network the Alliance through the 10th Global Forum and Canadian Conference a new initiative was born, namely to launch a campaign "Champions of Health Promotion". Interns recruited by the International Pharmaceutical Students Federation, IPSF have been very instrumental in developing the concept which aimed at gathering stories and innovative initiatives of health promotion actions around the world. The idea was to create an online platform to share best practices and thus, offer more visibility to our members. Due to lack of capacity we had to suspend this initiative but would be pleased to carry on next year.
MEMBERSHIP

The Alliance membership is composed of 31 organisations, mainly NGOs and academic institutions and 15 individuals.

Unfortunately we have lost our student members from UCLA, University of Los Angeles Public Health School as their membership was linked to their in-person participation at the World Health Assembly. They have been instrumental in developing policy briefs and statements on various agenda items of the WHA and attended as part of the Alliance delegation. We hope to win them back for the next WHA if it will be a physical meeting.

We welcome new members who joined the Alliance during this reporting period:

Organisations:
- Experts Group on Inositol in Basic and Clinical Research (EGOI) from Italy
- Health Promotion Alliance Cameroon

Individual members
- Jean-Pierre Girard, Lecturer at Québec University in Montreal, Canada
- Anabela Tavares, psychologist, Portugal
- Karl John, Switzerland
- Dr Rashmi Cherian Paramesh, India
- Dr Roshan Cherian Paramesh, India

900 new members were admitted for one-year membership at the 10GFHP and 26th Canadian Conference on Global Health.

GOVERNANCE

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Alliance took place virtually on 8 December 2020. 30 representatives of member organisations and individual members attended. The quorum was ensured. Apart from adopting amendments to the Alliance's Statutes, the AGM focused on electing a new Board of ten members. The list of the Board members is attached. Thanks were expressed to the outgoing Board members.

The new Board met on 15 December to elect among themselves the Officers. The results are the following:

President Bernard Kadasia
Vice-President Elizabeth Cherian Paramesh
Secretary Gabriella Sozanski
Treasurer Jose Pérez

Thanks were expressed to the outgoing Treasurer, Jean-Pierre Girard.

Since the last AGM the Board has had 5 virtual meetings. Going digital offered the advantage of more frequent consultations with members which has improved the governance of the Alliance.
**COMMUNICATION**

As physical meetings were not allowed during the year the Alliance was obliged to make adjustments in its communication strategy and invest in providing digital tools in order to ensure a smooth running of the organisation.

The improved content of the new website and an increased presence of the Alliance on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube) have largely contributed to the visibility of the Alliance, particularly through advertising the School Project. An attractive flyer (in English and French) announcing the webinar contained also the brief introduction of the Alliance’s mission and goals. It was widely disseminated through social media but also in printed format.

Regular newsletters through Mailchimp have reached more then 1000 people on our mailing list.

**RESOURCES**

**Office**

Since August 2012 the Secretariat coordinates the activities of the Alliance from a small independent office in Versoix, canton of Geneva where several other NGOs had their seat.

We are sharing the office in the Villa Grand-Montfleury to accommodate the Geneva Representation of three of our members:

- Life University,
- The Framework Convention on Global Health Alliance, FCGHA, an NGO recently established and supported by our member organisation, the O’Neill Institute of Georgetown University and,
- REPSSI (Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative) although the NGO Office of the State of Geneva has suspended their representation lacking annual collaboration agreement with the Alliance

Their authorization is subject to annual renewal.

To have a physical address is a precondition for registering an NGO or an NGO representation in Geneva.

2020-2021 has been another extremely challenging period struggling for maintaining the office. The rent and maintenance costs represent a major part of our expenditure. Even if the office was closed due to COVID-19 we had to pay the rent. Although an arrangement has been found with FIPOI, the Foundation in charge of the management of the building, it meant only a leniency. Our request for a waiver is still waiting for their response. The reduced income from membership fees during the pandemic does not even cover the office costs.
Human resources

As the Alliance has no paid staff special thanks need to be extended to the virtual interns and volunteers whose work has saved the Alliance during these difficult times. Four of the interns were recruited through the International Pharmaceutical Students’ Federation (IPSF) for a period of 6-10 weeks. Alicia stayed with us for 6-months, most of the time working remotely. For the Youth project we were able to hire a project officer through the Unemployment Office. After Chloé found her first paying job Dara Melati took over the project coordination and will stay with us until the end of the year.

Despite of the difficult circumstances and challenges the Alliance continued to carry on its thanks to the free services of interns and volunteers. There is no budget item for compensating human resources which should be changed. The digital capacity of the Alliance replacing partly human capacity would also require investment facilitating adaptation to the new working methods.

Finances

The attached consolidated Financial Report clearly shows that the Alliance can only survive due to the financial support received from the State of Geneva for implementing the Youth Project.

The income from membership fees has dropped by one-third as compared to the budgeted revenue and by 30% compared to the income from members’ fee year 2019. We are dependent on our members, mainly NGOs, who themselves face serious financial difficulties.

The extra contribution of members are highly appreciated and indispensable for the sustainability of the Alliance.