



Irish Forum for  
Global Health



# Working Together for Global Health and Wellbeing: Strategy 2018 - 2023

LEARNING ♦ NETWORKING ♦ ENGAGING



© IFGH | Flickr

# Acknowledgements

The Irish Forum for Global Health would like to sincerely thank all of the IFGH members for continuing to bring their support, enthusiasm and experience to the work of the Forum. We are also grateful to Capacity Development International (CDI) for their support and hard work in developing this new strategy.

# Methodology

This strategy was developed following an external evaluation conducted in late 2017, which used a number of different approaches, including:

- A thorough desk review of IFGH and ESTHER Ireland documents, M&E data, reports and web and social media
- 17 key-informant interviews
- Two in-depth interviews
- An email survey of the IFGH membership of which 57 responses were received
- Analysis and synthesis of the OECD/DAC framework and thematic analysis

Following and informed by the external evaluation the new strategy was developed through consultation with the Board, Secretariat and other stakeholders.

To get in contact with us, email us at [info@globalhealth.ie](mailto:info@globalhealth.ie) or visit us online at [www.globalhealth.ie](http://www.globalhealth.ie).

We are grateful for the continued support of Irish Aid.



# The Global Health Challenges We Face

Since the start of this century, there have been many developments that highlight the importance of global health, not only on the basis of social justice but also in terms of mutual interest.

Rising inequities in access to health services, multi-drug resistance, cross-border outbreaks of deadly diseases, increasing numbers of migrants and refugees and climate change make for an increasingly interconnected and uncertain world.

These along with urbanisation, the call for universal health coverage and the new conditions on the global health radar – non-communicable diseases, mental health and addiction, and trauma or injury - form the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Whilst the challenges are global, low- and middle-income countries shoulder a disproportionately high burden of disease, coupled with a massive shortfall in human resources for health. Providing access to quality health services without risk of financial hardship to service users places extreme pressure on health care providers and the under-resourced health systems in which they work.

The SDGs acknowledge the complexity and interconnectedness of the global challenges and are an ambitious call for concerted action. They will require innovative and collaborative solutions from all the nations of the world if they are to be achieved. If we are to improve future health outcomes we require adaptable and resilient health systems with an ability to respond to evolving health service need, new developments in science and technology and shifting economic, cultural and political contexts.

In the words of Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director General:

*“We have a historic opportunity to make transformational improvement in world health. Let’s do it. Let us do it for every woman and child who died when they didn’t have to die. And for every child who failed to reach her full potential. For every victim felled by an outbreak, for every small islander who is faced with the threat of climate change. Let us dedicate ourselves to them. Let us stand together for a healthier world.” (2017)*

The Irish Forum for Global Health seeks to maximise the Irish contribution in response to this call for action in global health.



# The Irish Forum for Global Health

The Irish Forum for Global Health (IFGH) is an independent network of people from different backgrounds, sectors and disciplines who are concerned with health inequities and issues that impact on the health and development of populations at a global level, with a particular commitment to those living in middle and low-income countries.

Established in 2004, the IFGH has within its membership health and development professionals and others with an interest in and a commitment to influencing education,

advocacy and policy working within the NGO sector, health sector and academia. Its membership is both local within Ireland and global. Membership is open to any individual who has an interest in global health, regardless of disciplinary background.

This strategic plan builds on our prior achievements and has a fresh focus of building traction around annual cross cutting themes and connecting individuals and institutions working in global health, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Key Achievements 2014-2017

The IFGH was independently evaluated in 2017 and these were some of the key achievements within the strategy's four goals highlighted in the evaluation.

### Goal 1: Build Capacity in Global Health

3

New  
Courses  
Developed

3

Courses  
Run  
Per Annum  
On Average

208

People  
Trained

6

Student  
Outreach  
Groups

## Goal 2: Provide a Platform for Increased Knowledge, Dialogue and Networking

15

Learning  
Events

507

People  
Attended  
In 2017

220

Online  
Mailshots

3

Tweets  
Per Day  
Average

## Goal 3: Support Engagement in Global Health through Facilitation of High-Quality Partnerships

During this period the ESTHER Ireland Secretariat was hosted at IFGH and the following achievements were under the remit of the ESTHER Ireland Secretariat.

184k

In Small  
Grants  
Disbursed

27

Grantees

4

New  
Partnerships  
Acquired

112

Event  
Participants

## Goal 4: Influence Global Health Policy, Both in Ireland and Internationally



Articles from  
**Global  
Health Writes**



Advocacy  
**Statements**



World Day  
**Campaigns**



Campus  
**World Day  
Events**

# IFGH Vision, Mission and Values

## OUR VISION

Maximising Ireland's contribution to a world in which all people of all ages have the opportunity to achieve and sustain good health and well-being.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission as a network is to facilitate learning, connecting, influencing and engaging for individuals and institutions within the global health community in Ireland and worldwide.

## OUR VALUES AND WAYS OF WORKING

We are an **inclusive** network, where membership is open to all and everyone is treated with **respect**. We strive constantly to improve our work based on **learning** from our actions, partners, stakeholders and members who are central to our ability to continue to deliver **quality** activities valued by our members and funders. We work both proactively and responsively. We are **proactive** in identifying key issues and cross-cutting themes that are important for the global health community in Ireland. We are **responsive** to emerging issues and member or partner interests. Within our organisation, we seek to be open and **transparent** about our decision-making processes and **accountable** to our funders and membership.

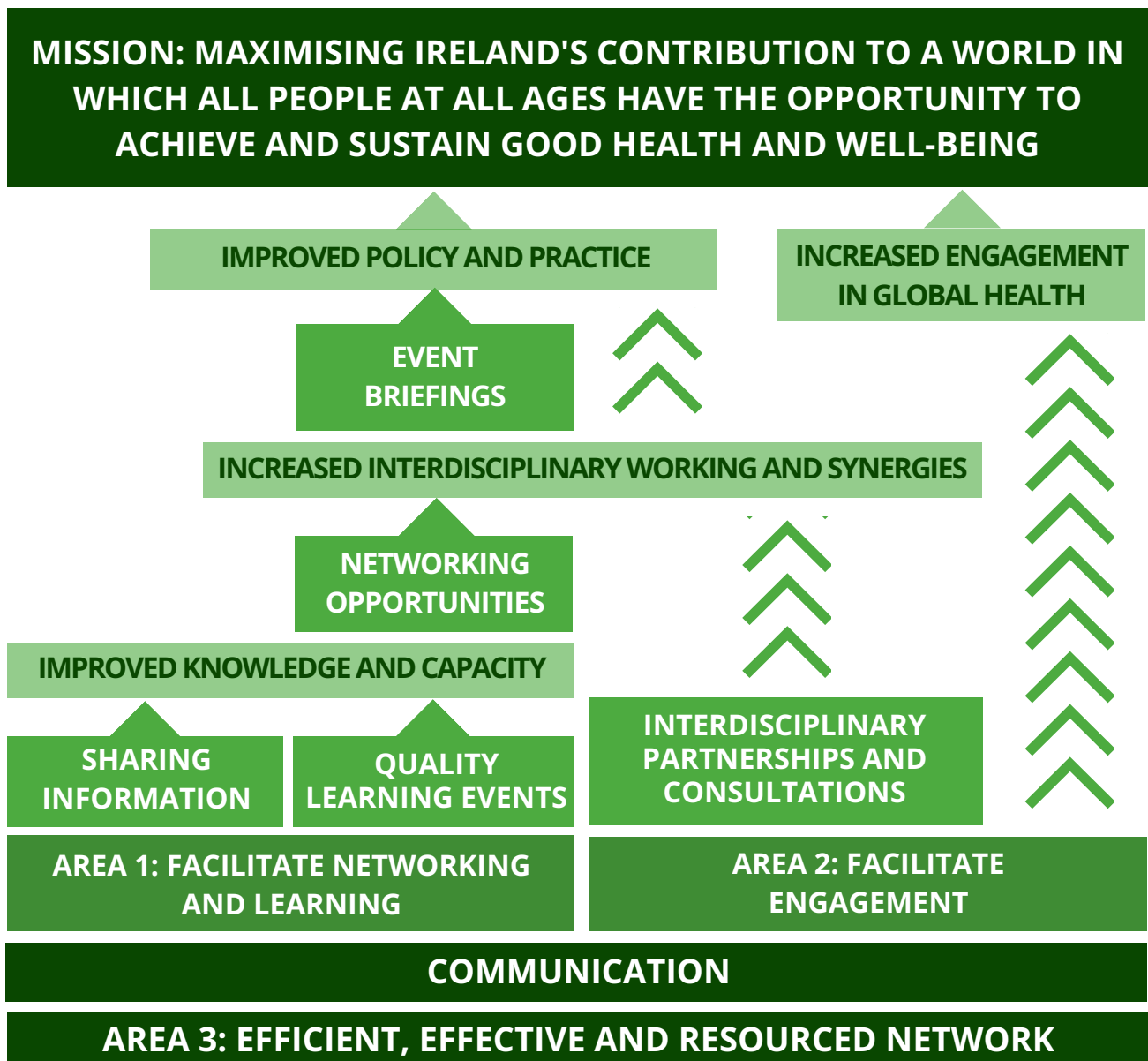
# What We Do

We seek to create efficiencies and synergies, promote effectiveness and reduce duplication in the work of the global health community in Ireland through facilitating the flow of information between disciplines, between sectors and between funders and recipients.

By engaging more young people, health sector professionals, development professionals and academics in global health we are sustaining and, where possible, growing the Irish contribution to global health.

## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Our theory of change encompasses all the work we do. Its foundation lies in building and sustaining an effective and efficient network, paired with high-quality communications. From there, each of our strategic focal areas and actions build upon each other to allow us to reach our mission.



# Strategic Focal Areas

## AREA 1: FACILITATE NETWORKING AND LEARNING

## AREA 2: FACILITATE ENGAGEMENT

## AREA 3: EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE AND RESOURCED NETWORK

We have two external strategic focal areas and one internal focal area relating to the strength of the organisation itself. These are:

- Area 1: Facilitate networking and learning through high quality events and sharing information
- Area 2: Facilitate engagement in global health through partnerships and linking individuals and organisations
- Area 3: Ensure an effective, efficient and resourced network

## AREA 1: FACILITATE NETWORKING AND LEARNING THROUGH HIGH-QUALITY EVENTS AND SHARING INFORMATION

A key strength of our network is the ability to connect individuals and institutions across disciplines to innovate, coordinate, and learn from each other. We do this through providing high quality learning opportunities and through the organisation of events and conferences. We are also a unique conduit for information within the global health community in Ireland, accessed by our members, Irish Aid and the wider global health community. Our high-quality learning events are built around a cross-cutting theme each year allowing us to build traction among practitioners, researchers and policy makers and ensure that Irish work in global health continues to be at the cutting edge.

While our members come from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds there are many issues in global health that underpin the ability to deliver quality health services within limited resources. These are global issues faced by all countries. In exploring the best way to address these issues we can benefit not only health outcomes in low and middle-income countries but also here in Ireland. Cross-cutting themes address areas that apply across multiple technical areas in health sector programming.

Examples of these cross-cutting global-local issues include:

- Addressing gender equity
- Strengthening health systems
- Strengthening the health workforce
- Achieving universal health coverage
- Achieving access to medicines and vaccines
- Improving the interface between primary health care and community health
- Embedding quality improvement in health service delivery
- Using mHealth
- Managing non-communicable diseases
- Promoting human rights
- Youth-friendly services
- Strengthening management and leadership
- Reaching underserved populations



To do justice to these often-complex issues, each year we will address a different cross-cutting theme which will be explored through a linked series of events, policy and practice briefings, information sharing and where applicable media awareness.

We will also seek to create new partnerships and work alongside both international and national interest groups connected to the annual theme. All these activities will build on each other in one thematic area to create traction and synergy that has the potential to positively influence policy and practice in Ireland.

The IFGH is proud to be the host of the Irish Aid Annual Father Michael Kelly lecture on HIV and AIDS. This lecture brings media attention and ensures that HIV/AIDS remains on the national and global health agenda. We will continue to organise and host the lecture.

We will focus on creating new innovative methods to link people together based on their interests or potential synergies. In particular, we will focus on innovative methods to bring people together at our events and will evaluate how technology might help us signpost and connect people with similar or complementary interests.

We intend to host regular global health themed events and conferences in Ireland subject to identifying sufficient resources required for organising and supporting them.

As a network with members across Ireland and further afield many of our members access our e-communications through the newsletter, Facebook, website, Twitter or YouTube.

- The newsletter forms a vital conduit of news and opportunities within the global health community in Ireland. It also allows us to circulate information on emerging and key issues in global health.
- Our YouTube channel allows us to reach a larger audience for some of our key speakers and lectures.
- Our website and Facebook page keeps our membership up to date on upcoming events and allows us to archive key information and resources.
- Our Twitter account allows us to engage with the global health community both here in Ireland and globally.

We can highlight the work of our members, engage in key debates and raise awareness around emerging and key issues in global health.

### Key Activities: Annual Cross-Cutting Theme

- Annual series of linked events on a single cross-cutting theme
- Annual policy and practice briefs produced on a single cross-cutting theme
- Awareness raising and information sharing on a single cross-cutting theme utilising Global Health Writes
- Seek partnerships with international and national interest groups in relation to annual themes.

## Key activities: Other Learning Events and Sharing Information

- Organise the Father Michael Kelly lecture annually
- Organise learning events on key emerging issues in global health
- Create innovative networking opportunities at events and online
- Organise conferences in global health in Ireland
- E-newsletters circulated at least twice a month to the membership
- Appropriate use of the website and social media channels to circulate and archive information
- Engage with the global health community in Ireland and globally through Twitter

## AREA 2: FACILITATE ENGAGEMENT IN GLOBAL HEALTH THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND LINKING INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS

We are primarily a facilitator and we seek to promote engagement in global health across disciplines. We will continue to collaborate with our core partners across the health and development sectors who are central to our ability to deliver value to our members. Our partners contribute ideas, expertise, members for working groups, speakers, in kind contributions such as venue space and financially through the Friends of the Forum scheme. We facilitate access to the global health community for our partners and indeed any organisation with information or events of importance to the community. All our events are delivered in partnership with other organisations. Research has shown that successful networks are built on communication and the synergies that come from formal and informal interaction between members. We invest in high quality communications using a wide range of current technologies to effectively communicate and connect with our members. A particular focus of this strategic plan is the use of new and innovative techniques to link and connect our members at face to face events, through social media or through signposting.

The IFGH and ESTHER Ireland have a strong relationship; we have hosted the ESTHER Ireland secretariat since 2014 and have been instrumental in helping engage and support health professionals involved in institutional health partnerships. Whilst there are planned changes to the governance of ESTHER Ireland, we will remain engaged with ESTHER Ireland and its vision of facilitating the engagement of Ireland's health professionals in global health.

A key priority for us is to ensure the supply of future global health professionals and champions through student engagement. We provide support to Student Outreach Groups (SOGs) operating in Irish Universities. In 2018, there were seven SOGs. These groups operate independently, providing students with the opportunity to learn new skills in organisation, event planning and communication as well as raising their awareness of key global health issues and careers.

Global Health Writes is a highly innovative project which seeks to increase communication skills among early career professionals in the global health community. Regular workshops run by communication specialists teach journalism skills needed to write technical or opinion pieces or produce blogs or vlogs.



© DFID | Flickr

We will also be both proactive and responsive in facilitating interdisciplinary working. Proactive through the organisation of working groups such as the Training Working Group and responsive to new opportunities that our members, partners or funders identify.

When there are new policy consultations which touch on global health, we will coordinate responses from our membership, pulling together their considerable expertise and insights to benefit Ireland's policy making. We will also actively lobby for development spending by the Irish government.

### Key activities:

- Sustain an engaged membership
- Maintain and grow our partnerships
- Provide support to ESTHER Ireland
- Support Student Outreach Groups in all major third-level institutions
- Run Global Health Writes workshops
- Facilitate interdisciplinary working in global health in Ireland
- Coordinate inter-sectoral health-related responses to policy consultations and lobby for development support and resourcing

## AREA 3: ENSURING AN EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND RESOURCED NETWORK

We are a network with a very small central staff and limited resources; as such we have to use what we have wisely to create the greatest value for our members and funders. It is important that we work as effectively and efficiently as possible working within our limited resources whilst ensuring that we look after our staff, interns and those that volunteer their time for the network. We will seek to build our network so that it is strong enough to weather changes in governance or personnel.

- Maintain an active, engaged and representative Board
- Identify and evaluate opportunities for cost-sharing and other funding
- Maintain strong financial reporting
- Maintain strong monitoring and evaluation
- Keep abreast with new opportunities in ICT

# Governance and Management

Our Board is interdisciplinary with representation from academia, development NGOs, health professionals and global health students. They provide the oversight of the work of the Forum whilst the Executive Management Committee supports the Secretariat in the running of the Network. Board members are highly active in the work of the Forum.

Our Secretariat, although small, encompasses people with a wide skill set and has built strong relationships with key organisations and individuals in the global health sector. These relationships allow us to create synergies that individuals or institutions cannot achieve alone.

Partnership and harnessing the expertise and passion of our members allows us to deliver more than we could working solely through our Secretariat. This includes significant contributions in kind whether through access to venue space or time to help organise or plan events.

We operate an ethical internship scheme offering entry-level global health experience, mentoring and the opportunity for interns to pursue their own special projects

## OUR KEY PARTNERS

We work closely with a wide range of academic and NGO partners inside and outside of Ireland co-hosting events and producing publications. We also partner specifically with our Friends of the Forum to deliver value to our members. More details about the Friends of the Forum are available on our website, [globalhealth.ie](http://globalhealth.ie)

# Monitoring and Evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation framework has been developed alongside this strategic framework to allow assessment of progress against the plan. Our monitoring and framework is underpinned by our Theory of Change. Targets and measures will be monitored on an annual basis and will be agreed alongside the annual workplan.



A photograph of a young child and an adult, overlaid with a green tint. The child is in the foreground, looking slightly to the right. The adult is partially visible on the left side of the frame. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with some structures.

The Irish Forum for Global Health is an independent network of people concerned with the health and development of populations at a global level, with a particular commitment to populations in low income countries.

Established in 2004, the IFGH welcomes individuals and groups interested in promoting global health-related education, research, policy and advocacy. We offer our members opportunities for learning and collaboration through events and conferences, and we work to create and strengthen both national and international links within the global health community. Become a member by visiting our website and signing up at [www.globalhealth.ie](http://www.globalhealth.ie).