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The essence of global health equity is the idea that something so precious as health might be viewed as a right. Paul E. Farmer (1959-2022). The recent passing of Dr. Farmer, a friend, colleague, and inspiration to many of us deprives the world of one of the greatest humanitarians of our time.

We dedicate this annual report to Paul Farmer and renew our commitment to address global health disparities through health education.

Our mission is to create engaging, high-need digital health education that can scale quickly and cost effectively to communities worldwide. We believe that health education ultimately transforms behavior that leads to actions supporting the human right of health and wellness. We aim to directly inform global communities about prevalent and emerging critical health issues and to support the training of the dedicated community health workers who serve these communities.

This past year we continued to create, distribute, and evaluate content that addresses the global challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through expanded collaborations and partnerships, our digital content has reached millions of learners across 140 countries. The COVID pandemic brought a dire sense of urgency and importance to our work in health education; as it recedes, we must not lose sight of the broader health education needs of our global communities. Thus, we continue to expand our library of content relevant to maternal and child health, including high impact topics such as infant stunting and intimate partner violence. We worked in collaboration with the Community Health Impact Coalition in the development of a course focused on Community Health Worker self-advocacy.

We remain true to our strategic approach to create compelling digital content that addresses high-need health topics and employs human-centered design principles. We critically evaluate the success of the content to improve knowledge, change behavior, and improve health. We seek to build global collaborations and partnerships that enhance our effectiveness and impact. We are proud to count over 40 collaborators that we have worked with over the last year. As Dr. Farmer often said: *With rare exceptions, all of your most important achievements on this planet will come from working with others - or, in a word, partnership.*

Charles Prober, MD
Founding Executive Director, Stanford Center for Health Education

"With rare exceptions, all of your most important achievements on this planet will come from working with others - or, in a word, partnership."

Dr. Paul Farmer
Pictured (left) with Dr. Charles Prober (right)
Expanding access to engaging education has the power to change behaviors, improve health, and save lives.

Our expertise lies in translating complex health information into rich learning experiences that resonate with learners across backgrounds and literacy levels.
Our mission is to create engaging, high-need digital health education that can scale quickly and cost effectively to communities worldwide.

We are a team of clinicians, global health researchers, and educational experts with offices in Stanford and Cape Town. We create digital health content and evaluate its educational benefits for community health workers, other professionals, and the general public. We focus on learners in low- and middle-income communities around the world.

**Education design**
We help identify high-need health topics and employ human-centered design principles to create relevant, actionable, and enjoyable learning experiences.

**Global collaboration**
We partner with non-governmental organizations, governmental bodies, and the communities we serve to co-create, distribute and evaluate our content.

**Impact evaluation**
We measure the impact of our initiatives and continuously iterate based on our findings. We are a collaborative learning lab and share research to promote global advances in health education.

"We absolutely love working with the Digital Medic team. The content you produce is top-notch, and we appreciate the rigorous, thoughtful approach you bring to designing, distributing, and evaluating content. The quality of your learning & promotional materials, and the caliber of your research, are strengths that stand out."

Feedback collected in our 2021 Collaborator Survey
We are committed to reaching communities worldwide with evidence-based, timely, & understandable health information.

Our materials are:

**Credible**
In our current era of global misinformation, many people do not know who to trust for health information. Our content is co-created and vetted by Stanford health experts, and distributed through locally-trusted health sources.

**Engaging**
Health education materials are often presented using a traditional, didactic pedagogical approach. Our story-based approach engages learners to increase knowledge retention.

**Adaptable**
Health education content is often created for specific audiences. Our designs balance localization with scalability, so the materials we create for one community can be easily adapted to resonate in others.

**Accessible**
Public-facing educational content is often limited and, if available, usually delivered in text-heavy formats. Our video-based and visual-centric content overcomes literacy barriers.

**Scalable**
The delivery of content often does not leverage widespread forms of communication. Our content is widely accessible through our global technology partners as well as our website, YouTube channel, and mobile app with downloadable content. We create content in a variety of formats to reach learners across devices and data barriers.
MEASURING REACH: 2016 - 2021

27M+ learners reached across 140 countries via Digital Medic & collaborator platforms

12M learners accessed content through Digital Medic platforms

15M learners accessed Digital Medic content through collaborators
COVID-19 RESPONSE

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to have a devastating effect on communities around the world. We feel fortunate that our years of experience digitizing and localizing health information has positioned us well to respond to the ongoing need for credible health content during this global emergency, for both health workers and the general public.

9.7M+ learners accessed COVID-19 content on Digital Medic platforms from 2020 - 2021

COVID-19 TRAINING FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Developed together with Stanford Emergency Medicine, our free, certificate-granting course prepares health workers to recognize, stabilize, and treat patients with COVID-19.

Since 2020, over 220,000 learners have accessed course content through Coursera, edX, YouTube, and the Digital Medic app.

New in 2021:

- Available in 5 languages: English, Spanish, Hindi, French, and Portuguese
- New modules on vaccines and pediatrics, and updates to existing modules like therapeutics
- Offered through AFREhealth's learning platform for healthcare professionals
- Adapted for urgent health worker up-skilling with collaborators in Uganda

“Thank you for the remote training opportunity. It helps me continue to learn necessary information, so I can continue giving attention to those who need it.”
Coursera learner (translated from Spanish)
In 2021, we continued to produce timely, evidence-based, and open access resources around COVID-19. Many of these resources have been adapted to reach millions of learners around the world. Some of our 2021 projects include:

**Viral Facts**
We published 26 videos as part of our "Viral Facts" series on YouTube, so that we could rapidly address trending questions about COVID-19. The videos feature various Stanford Medicine faculty answering questions about variants, vaccines, COVID in children, tips for home care, mental health, and more. The series received over 4 million views in 2021.

**COVID-19 Toolkit**
Our adaptable toolkit contains dozens of animated videos and infographics that communicate key COVID-19 health messages in several languages. In 2021, we added new highly-produced videos that cover topics in mental health as well as how vaccines work. The videos have been shared widely and adapted for various health initiatives, including for World Mental Health Day in collaboration with UNICEF.

We also translated 4 existing videos into 5 new languages: Malay, Vietnamese, Thai, Indonesian, and Filipino. Since the videos use visuals designed for broad resonance, the effort to adapt them was minimal yet had significant reach: The 20 videos were circulated in Southeast Asia and gained nearly 5 million views in 1 month.

We continue to believe that resources which are easily adaptable & scalable can help meet the global demand for high quality health education in a cost-effective & timely fashion.

View all COVID-19 Resources
Advocacy Training for CHWs

CHWs have historically been excluded from decision making that influences their work and communities. We worked with the Community Health Impact Coalition and an advisory group of CHWs to develop a free, digital course that equips CHWs with the advocacy and storytelling skills to elevate their voices in decision-making conversations.

To complement the training, we recently released a Facilitator Guide to support group and hybrid learning models.

"I have a voice to speak because I have been on all these programmes and I have found out my rights as a CHW."
- CHW advisor & advocate

COVID-19 and Intimate Partner Violence

Globally, 1 in 3 women will experience intimate partner violence (IPV) in their lifetime. We worked with Stanford University’s Department of Emergency Medicine and the community-based organization Next Door Solutions to create a video-based training for CHWs. Available in English and Spanish, this series explains the complexities of IPV while navigating the challenges the pandemic has created in seeking help.

According to the WHO, 3 million child deaths each year could be prevented by care that a trained and supported CHW could provide.

We work with CHWs to co-create, evaluate, and deliver training on high-need health topics, and to equip CHWs with shareable health content they can use as teaching tools with their communities.

2021 Projects:

Advocacy Training for CHWs

COVID-19 and Intimate Partner Violence

Learn more

Learn more

OTHER HIGH-NEED HEALTH TOPICS

"Accessible and engaging health education is a cornerstone of health behavior change. Especially in low- and middle-income communities, increasing access to effective health education can contribute to improved health outcomes."*

In 2021 we continued to respond to requests for digital education content on high-need health topics:

**Stunting Prevention**
One in four children in South Africa is stunted. The impact of stunting reaches far beyond height: it impairs a child’s learning ability for the rest of their life, and it can begin even before a baby is born.

We worked with the Grow Great Campaign in South Africa to add 4 new videos to our existing series on this important topic:

* Nutrition during pregnancy
* Feeding your family on a budget
* Routine care for children
* Danger signs during pregnancy

**Snakebite Prevention & First Aid**
The World Health Organization estimates that 5.4M people are bitten by snakes every year. We created an animated video with the Eswatini Antivenom Foundation that teaches snakebite prevention strategies, as well as first aid tips should a bite occur.

EVALUATION AND LEARNING

Our theory of change is rooted in the belief that an increase in health knowledge leads to an increase in health-promoting behaviors, which ultimately results in improved health outcomes.

Our evaluation team works with collaborators around the world to identify opportunities for improvement in digital learning models.

2021: 1.5 Year RCT Results Published in PLOS Medicine

We worked with the Philani Maternal, Child Health and Nutrition Trust in the Western Cape Province of South Africa to measure the effects of a video education intervention on exclusive breastfeeding practices among 1,502 new mothers through a randomized controlled trial.

Our findings suggest that video interventions can be leveraged to amplify the health promotion efforts of CHWs, and in areas where CHWs are limited or not present, digital education can be a potential bridge to quality preventative health models.

Ongoing Studies

- Evaluating the effectiveness of a social media campaign to promote COVID-19 vaccination among Indigenous families in Guatemala with the University of California San Francisco and Wuqu’ Kawoq - Maya Health Alliance
- Investigating the impact of interactive voice response COVID-19 vaccinator training in the Democratic Republic of Congo with Viamo
- Assessing the impact of advocacy training for CHWs with the Community Health Impact Coalition

Learn more about our approach
See the published paper

View all ongoing studies
2021 SUPPORTERS & COLLABORATORS

AFREhealth
Association for Dietetics, South Africa
Burke Family Foundation
CLEAR Global
Clinton Health Access Initiative
Community Health Impact Coalition
Coursera
Dimagi
Educast
edX
ELMA Foundation
National Department of Health, South Africa
Next Door Solutions
Noora Health
One to One Africa Children's Fund
Paddock Family Trust
PATH
Perinatal Mental Health Project
Philani Maternal, Child Health & Nutrition Trust
Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town
South and Southeast Asian Community-based Trials Network

Our work is made possible through the generous support of our donors and the expertise and energy of our collaborators.

We thank you for your continued support in making health education more accessible to communities worldwide.

Emerson Collective
Eswatini Antivenom Foundation
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance
Grow Great
Jembi Health Systems
La Leche League South Africa
Last Mile Health
Lwala Community Alliance
Medic
Side-by-Side Campaign
Stellenbosch University
TechChange
UNICEF
University of California San Francisco
University of Cape Town
University of Global Health Equity
Viamo
Western Cape Department of Health
Wuqu' Kawoq - Maya Health Alliance
YouTube
MEET OUR TEAM

Stanford, United States  
Cape Town, South Africa

As pictured from left to right, top to bottom:

Row 1  
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Katherine Sziraczky, Engagement Lead  
Victoria Ward, Medical Director  
Erika Tribett, Instructional Designer  
Shân Fischer, Illustrator

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Semay Johnston, Learning Experience Director  
Katie Gleason, Production Project Manager  
Donald Nyahuye, Digital Media Specialist  
Kira-Leigh Kuhnert, South Africa Program Manager

Row 3  
Charles Prober, Executive Director  
Jonathan Berek, Health Communication Initiative Director  
Nadine Skinner, Research Analyst  
Nophiwe Job, Research Analyst  
Carlos Sanchez, Creative Producer

Row 4  
Jackie Peterson, Program Manager  
Saumya Singla, Research Analyst  
Monika Deschodt, Learning Experience Designer