

Looking to 2022 with Renewed Energy

It's hard to believe that almost 12 months have passed since I [wrote here](#) ushering in HAI's 40th anniversary year. In that piece I talked about the year of our founding, 1981, in which the world celebrated the eradication of smallpox, juxtaposing that successful global vaccination effort against the challenge we were facing in the fight against COVID-19. That latter battle is far from over and it won't be unless and until the whole world, not just the rich countries of the North, are vaccinated. Together we must continue to push for a waiver on intellectual property rights for COVID-19 related vaccines and other health technologies, and for greater commitment by vaccine and diagnostics manufacturers, and their governments, to the World Health Organization's (WHO) COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP).

The inequality and urgency of global solutions to the COVID crisis has, understandably I think, taken much of our and the access to medicines movement's attention over the last year. However, in spite of the difficulties wrought by COVID restrictions, it has by no means taken away from our crucial work in other areas: snakebite, access to insulin, transparency, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), medicine and diagnostics pricing and so very much more. We are even now working on the influence of [artificial intelligence](#) on medicines policy.

2021 also marked the centenary of the discovery of insulin for the treatment of diabetes, turning a death sentence into a manageable chronic illness. Yet, 100 years on, access to insulin remains a challenge for 1 in 2 people in need around the world. Our [ACCISS Study](#) team used the centenary year to highlight some of these challenges and potential solutions through an inspiring short documentary, shot across six countries and in five different languages. If you haven't had the chance to see it yet, I highly recommend you do.

Meanwhile the uptake of our snakebite [prevention and first aid materials](#) continued unabated, with a particular highlight being our posters being [translated into Swahili](#) and distributed in rural parts of Kenya. Added to that, we now also have a [Spanish version](#) being put to good use in Costa Rica, not to mention versions in Luganda and Luo. I am particularly proud of the continued march of the Women Champions of Snakebite (WCOS), a vibrant international network of women, from scientists to frontline workers, all committed to reducing the disease burden of this devastating neglected tropical disease.

These are just a few of examples of the work that has been continuing against the difficult backdrop of the pandemic. Which brings me back to our 40th birthday, which we couldn't let pass us by without some sort of celebration. In an ideal world, we would have been together with members of the movement for a proper party (and we will one day!). Alas, that was not to be the case in May, but we were pleased to be able to [gather virtually](#) to reflect not only on HAI as an organisation, but on the role of civil society as a whole in global health. We also used it as an opportunity to hear from, and thank, the people who have been [part of our](#)

[story](#) so far and, importantly, remember those [who we lost](#) along the way.

It's been a hugely challenging, often frustrating, frequently sad, and perhaps even defining year for our movement. I hope, in fact I know, the fantastic team at HAI and all our network members, colleagues and comrades worldwide will look towards 2022 with renewed energy and hope for the difference our work can make for people all around the world.

Happy New Year.