

Staff Spotlight: Jaume Vidal

In this edition of #StaffSpotlight, we present Jaume Vidal, a Policy Advisor on Health Action International's (HAI) European Projects team. When you see Jaume in the office, he's often teasing Alex, our Communications Advisor, eating a kiwi, or showing someone a picture of his new baby son. But on top of his charismatic social presence, Jaume is a one of the most knowledgeable and skillful advocates on biomedical innovation issues. We sat down with Jaume to get his take on #HAILife.



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What is your role at HAI?

As a European Projects Policy Advisor, my focus is mainly on how intellectual property (IP), innovation, and trade play a role in access to medicines. My work consists mainly of monitoring developments at the World Health Organization and European Union (EU) institutions, like the European Parliament and European Commission. I contribute to public consultations, participate in meetings, and try to engage as much as possible with other stakeholders, including government officials, advocates, or other concerned parties.

What are three words to describe HAI?

Robust, reliable and genuine.

What is the most interesting aspect of your field of expertise?

The possibility (and need) of connecting people and topics in a coherent agenda for action.

How do you make people interested in your topic?

Showing them the impact that some of our key issues, such as patents or development costs, have in their day-to-day lives or areas of work.

What do you wish people would be more aware of?

I would love for people to realise that, despite the odds, it's possible and necessary to change unjust situations. For example, the lack of timely access to needed medicines is unjust and must be fought.

What do you like most about working at HAI and what have you gained from working here?

I enjoy working with people who are committed to changing unjust situations, be it the plight of snakebite victims, the difficulties endured by people living with diabetes to afford insulin treatment, or the shortcomings of the current research and development (R&D) system. Working alongside different teams has provided me with new perspectives for my own work, which, in the end, is an added value because it makes me more effective. Showing that the lack of effective snakebite antivenom is an innovation failure, or demonstrating that the high prices of insulin have nothing to do with IP or development costs, strengthens our arguments for an upheaval of the IP protection framework and the patent-centered R&D model.

If you could choose one policy recommendation to be accepted and turned into undisputed policy tomorrow, what would it be?

I would like to see governments stepping up to actively and effectively defend the human rights of citizens when it comes to access to medicines. That would mean controlling prices of medicines, curtailing abuses of the patent system, and channeling the R&D efforts towards health needs, not only potentially lucrative products.

Want to find out more about Jaume? Take a look at his [staff page](#)!

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