



## Health for All in an interconnected world

**We share an interconnected world.** Young mothers in Botswana, community health workers in Bolivia, electronics workers in Indonesia, immigrants in the US. Wherever we are, whatever languages we speak, however we get information, we are dependent on each other's good health and the well-being of the planet. Technology, globalized industries, climate chaos, and migration impact our lives and link our futures more than ever before.

**But the world remains unequal, and that affects our health differently.** For almost 50 years, Hesperian's books, and now our digital releases, mobile apps, and print booklets, have provided people everywhere with tools to struggle against

*(cont. on next page)*

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hesperian  
health guides

**Annual Report  
July 2019–June 2020**

## From our Executive Director

Dear friends of Hesperian,

I just finished a Zoom call planning a health awareness campaign with participants from Ecuador, India, Belgium and Canada. Our discussion was productive, fulfilling and inspiring, yet also unsettling. I know we're all feeling that contradiction: the loneliness of our isolation alongside a heightened reliance on our interconnection with one another.

The accomplishments celebrated in this annual report describe the extraordinary results of health solidarity across borders during the quarantine. Hesperian's small and dedicated staff collaborated closely-remotely with volunteers on every continent and in every time zone to rapidly produce the information that people needed locally to stay healthy through the pandemic. Those partners activated networks to spread the news about how *not* to spread the virus. It was broadcasted on local radio, posted on church doors, distributed with truck deliveries, painted as murals at markets, leafleted at schools and workplaces, and shared over social media — all practical actions of health solidarity.

Health solidarity is real public health — not the top-down issuing of guidelines and orders, but people protecting themselves by becoming informed and actively protecting each other.

From how to dig pit latrines to how to use our Family Planning app, that's what Hesperian has been doing for almost 50 years: helping people take charge of their own health and the health of their community. Your participation in health solidarity — as donors, caring neighbors, and health promoters — will ensure that all of us overcome COVID-19, turn back climate devastation, and build a society that makes Health for All not just possible, but a reality.

Of course we can do that.

Sincerely,



Sarah Shannon  
Executive Director  
Hesperian Health Guides

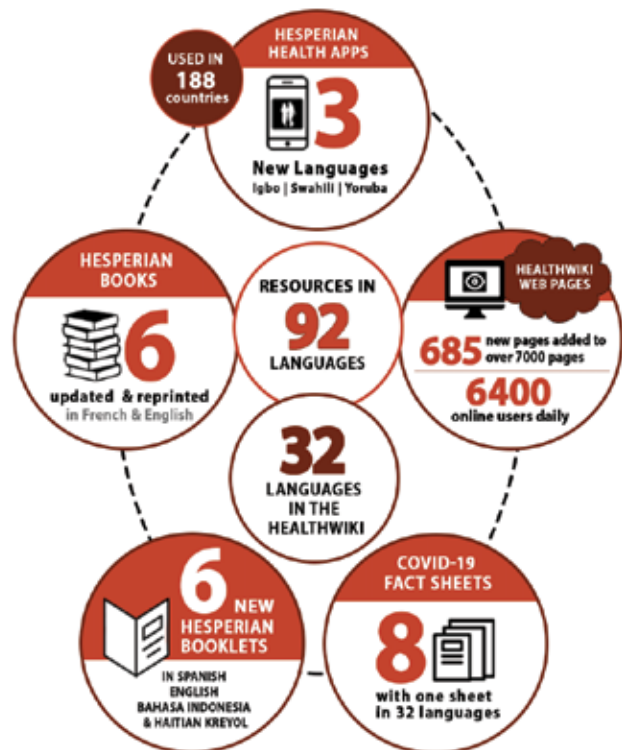


### An interconnected world, *continued*

unequal access to good health. This past year, as increasing inequality was exacerbated by the pandemic, we responded by updating, reprinting, and distributing more resources than ever. Our online HealthWiki is practically bursting with new materials and translations.

We too had to adjust to the pandemic. Hesperian transitioned to remote work and quickly released eight free, downloadable COVID-19 Fact Sheets in multiple languages. As access to reproductive health services declined, the use of our reproductive health apps soared.

**Hesperian is part of a global movement.** We are in awe of our network of partners around the world who inspire and amplify the work of our small staff. We share a co-dependency of the best sort as publishers, researchers, translators, health workers, teachers, activists, journalists, donors, and volunteers. Together we are determined to realize Health for All.



# Covid-19: Mutual support overcomes “social distancing”

Hesperian’s materials on COVID-19 have spread around the world almost as quickly as the pandemic itself. Not only were our materials among the earliest to appear in almost 30 languages, they were always the first written in an understandable, actionable style that people without medical training could share to protect their communities.

The difficult separations we all face to avoid the virus actually brought Hesperian and our translation partners closer together. Our COVID-19 Fact Sheets are now in 32 languages. Behind each language is a partner, a story, a movement to improve people’s health.

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*“RHEST used information from Hesperian to publish 10,000 copies of a booklet on COVID-19, and we have already distributed 6,000!”*

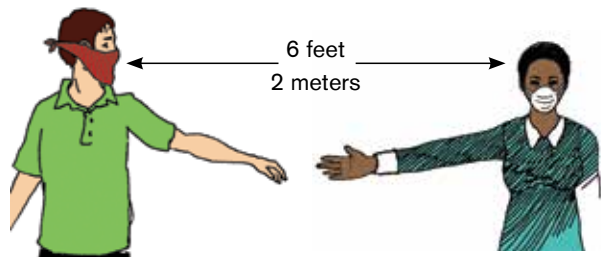
— Dr. Aruna Uprety, Nepal

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In 2018, Smetch Sidbanda requested a book donation from our Gratis (free) Book Program for a library and youth organization in his Cowdray Park neighborhood of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Smetch is a trained paramedic who finds volunteering his health skills a rewarding way to serve his community. Early in the pandemic, Smetch wrote to say he wanted to translate our COVID-19 materials into Ndebele, the first language of over 5 million people in Zimbabwe. And no sooner had he finished the Fact Sheets, he began to translate *New Where There Is No Doctor!* Given colonialism’s legacy of social and economic inequity in Zimbabwe, Smetch’s translations will improve and save thousands of lives.

This is just one of the many partnerships that sprang into action during the pandemic. We now have resources in several new-to-Hesperian languages, including Nande (Uganda/Democratic Republic of the Congo), Oromo (Ethiopia), and Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea).

In the places where our resources are used



*In the first 6 months, 90,000 people from 170 countries accessed our COVID-19 Fact Sheet.*

the most, life is often precarious, making long-term and long-distance relationships hard to maintain. Connecting is even more difficult where people lack adequate and affordable internet access, live with government censorship, or face other challenges. But spending the time and energy to build respectful, lasting partnerships is part of what Hesperian does best — both during and after COVID-19.



HELP Resources

*HELP Resources translated our COVID-19 Fact Sheet into Tok Pisin, distributing it to vendors in Papua New Guinea’s busy markets.*

# Connecting for a cause: Supporting the right to health

Social media and digital communication tools are powerful connectors of people around the globe. If we can harness these connections and technologies — not just be consumer targets of them — the potential for improving people's conditions and health is enormous. During this year of crisis, Hesperian has focused our social media to reach new constituencies and strengthen partnerships that extend the ways our health information serves the people who need it most.

**Sister AID Liberia (SALI)** is a women-led organization and a longstanding Hesperian partner that promotes the rights and health of Liberian women and girls. SALI's dynamic director, Miatta Darwolor, reached out in April 2020 to explore how to develop solutions to restricted access to reproductive health services during the pandemic's lockdowns. To tap the creativity of people in Liberia and beyond, Miatta and Hesperian hosted a video call on "Addressing Reproductive Health Access and Gender-Based Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic." What a vibrant discussion we had! SALI members, Hesperian staff, and health advocates across Africa all shared varied and innovative experiences in using tech tools to overcome barriers to reproductive health. It was an unforgettable morning (in our time zone) of many international collaborators supporting SALI and extending the information in our reproductive health apps to people working in different contexts.

**Downloading digital resources to then print and distribute them** is a way to quickly get up-to-date health information into people's hands. This has been a popular use of Hesperian's online COVID-19 Fact Sheets, which are designed to print as well as consult on phones or laptops. Atzin, an organization in Tlmacazapa, México that responds to the varied needs of the area's Nahua villages, distributed Hesperian's Spanish COVID-19 fact sheets to community leaders tasked with organizing their pandemic response. Atzin further shared copies with other groups to

push the information out beyond their villages. Especially in rural areas, we frequently hear how those with digital access bridge the divide to those without by printing and sharing Hesperian resources.

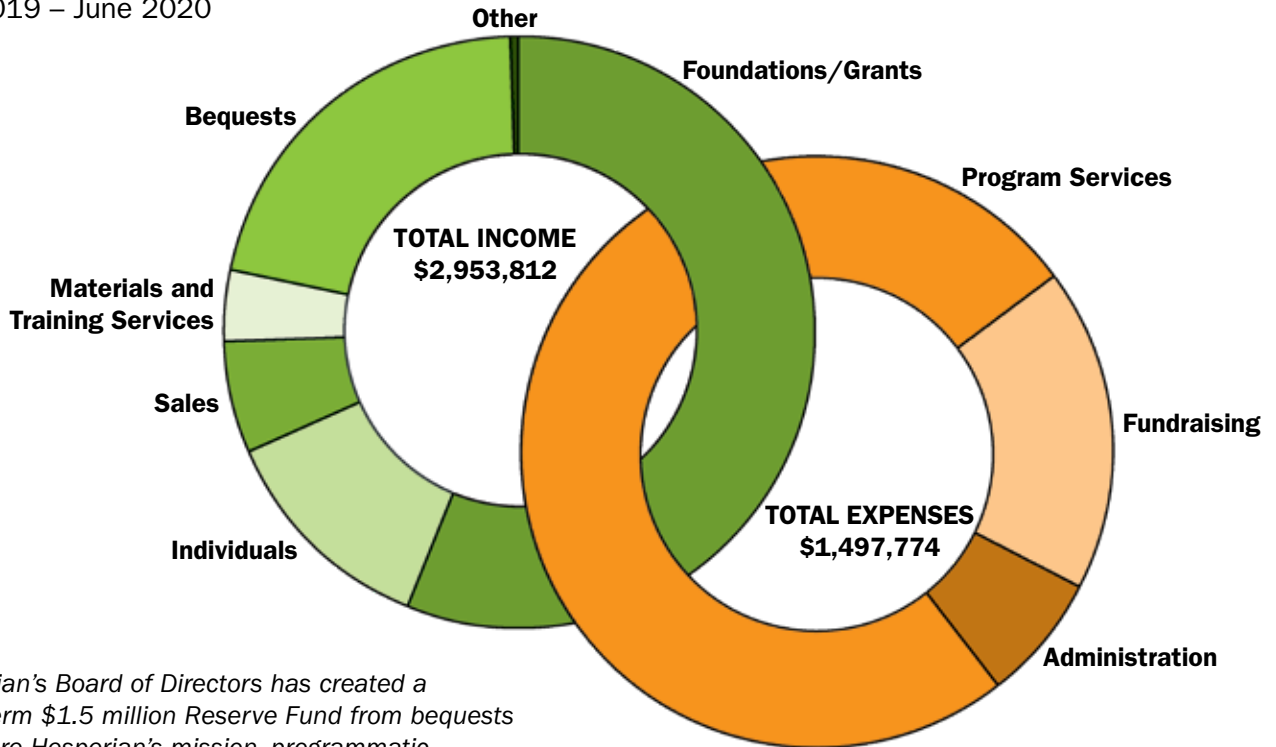
**Social media** can be an invaluable platform to share information and debate, and to build consensus and capacity. In 2020, the response to our social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) in English, Spanish and French grew exponentially! Hesperian participates in many vibrant social networks focused on reproductive health issues. In March, we teamed with Ipas and safe2choose to run a Twitter campaign on universal access to reproductive health and rights. The entire campaign was planned over WhatsApp and culminated in a lively Twitter chat on International Women's Day, involving organizations and advocates spanning the continents. The day's rich exchanges led to new partnerships, further action, and increased access to our reproductive health resources.

In this time of uncertainty and complex challenges, staying connected with fellow changemakers is essential for the success of us all. Hesperian bridges divisions created by language, borders, and technology to overcome geographical distance as an obstacle to achieving change.



# Income and Expenses

July 2019 – June 2020



*Hesperian's Board of Directors has created a short-term \$1.5 million Reserve Fund from bequests to ensure Hesperian's mission, programmatic achievements and long-term stability.*

## Our heartfelt thanks

We feel such gratitude for the outpouring of support from our donors during this catastrophic year for world health. Combined with the invaluable time and expertise of 108 volunteers — helping with everything from translations to book packing — we are in a stronger position than ever to meet the challenges ahead.

Some of that strength is bittersweet. In the past two years, bequests from former board member Davida Coady and long-time supporter Arthur Naiman helped us stabilize our finances and diversify our staff to better achieve our goals. And a multi-year grant received from the Kira Sergievsky Charitable Trust is allowing us to develop a set of much-needed resources on epilepsy, which affects over 50 million people world-wide.

And more than anything, we thank our approximately 650 donors who contributed a total of \$362,413. Nearly a third have given generously to Hesperian for ten years or more and 10% are

monthly sustainers. Monthly giving, workplace matching gift programs, a gift in someone's honor, and buying books from Hesperian directly are all wonderful ways our donors support us. And to create a lasting legacy, name Hesperian in your will, insurance policy, retirement plan or trust.

### Daisy M. Allabach

Daisy M. Allabach (1933-2020) was a teacher, author, and illustrator whose community service in Sturgis, Michigan was admired widely. Her belief that people everywhere should have access to care led to several modest but meaningful annual gifts to Hesperian. In 2020, Hesperian received the unexpected news that we were a beneficiary of Daisy's annuity. Her unrestricted \$26,000 gift was born of her wish to promote Health for All.

Consult your legal and financial advisors when developing your estate plans. To learn more about supporting Hesperian with a legacy gift, contact Caiden Nason at [caiden@hesperian.org](mailto:caiden@hesperian.org) or (510) 845-1447.

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## About Hesperian

Hesperian Health Guides addresses urgent, emerging, and primary health needs, structural inequalities, and their root causes by working together with the people most directly affected. Our information and educational resources help people around the world take greater control over their health and lives. Our goal is to create a world with *Health for All, Now!*

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Linda Spangler, Treasurer  
Susan Weissert, Co-Chair  
Prentice Zinn

Board Members Emerita  
Pauline Butcher  
Ellen Vorder Bruegge

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Hesperian's partners are endlessly creative health educators and activists! From left to right: The **Utopia Foundation** distributed the Uganda edition of *Where There Is No Doctor* to 300 village health teams aiding 5000 people through their Right to Be Healthy campaign. **Peten Health** uses *Problems with the Eyes and Seeing* to train Guatemalan primary health promoters to identify and treat common eye problems plaguing their isolated region. **Sister AID Liberia** activists

depend on Hesperian's apps while counseling people and addressing reproductive health needs. High school student dynamo **Namfon Phonsouny** won UNFPA support to bring Hesperian's Lao titles to rural communities and went on to involve youth in translating COVID-19 information as the pandemic spread to Laos.

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