



Report

Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research

January 2019 –May 2020

1. Background

These days, with the corona-virus situation, it is easy to point out the need for more knowledge about global health issues. The pandemic illustrates many aspects of our scientific area, including the need for interdisciplinarity. Healthcare professionals are needed, but so are health economists, engineers, political scientists, agriculturists, and many others. Together, in an interdisciplinary co-operation, we can reach our goals and make a difference in the world.

This report concerns activities in the Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research (The Forum) from January 2019 up to May 2020. The Forum is a dynamic, interdisciplinary networking group of Norwegian institutions and independent investigators involved in Global Health research. The Forum engages in joint contemporary activities like forming debates, supporting policies that shape research, capacity building and dissemination of research results from the global community.

1.1 The establishment of The Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research

The Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research (Forum) was established in 2005.

The main objective for Forum is to promote research and education of high quality with the aim of improving health and health services for marginalized population groups in low and middle-income countries (LMICs). The main outcome of the project is that Forum has developed an important role as an interdisciplinary network within the field of global health and health research and provide a forum for exchanging ideas and views on research and methodology in Norway.

The Forum plays an important role as an interdisciplinary network within the field of global health and health research and provides a forum for exchanging ideas and views on research and methodology. Forum is also an arena for collaboration on issues related to academic training and curriculum development.

1.2 Statutes and purpose for Forum

The first General Assembly, 16 November 2006, approved Statues for The Forum. These have been revised three times, that last time in April 2018.

2. Activities in Forum 2019-2020

An overview of activities performed by the Forum in the period from January 2019 to May 2020 is presented here:

2.1 Members

The Forum is an interdisciplinary network of individuals who work with or have an interest in Global Health and Global Health research. In 2018, the organization of Forum was changed. Earlier, it was unclear who the members of Forum were, as institutions were members on behalf of their employees. Now, Forum has individual memberships.



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In 2019, Forum had a small campaign to register individuals for membership in Forum. A small brochure was developed, both a printed version and a pdf, with information about Forum. The brochure was distributed to potential members by the board members and their colleagues. There is no membership fee in Forum, and anyone who is interested in global health can register on the Forum website. As a member, you will be entitled to news and information about Forum activities, conferences, and funding sources. Today Forum has 251 members.

2.2 Board

The Forum has an elected Board that is responsible for all activities of the Forum. The Board has become an important meeting arena for discussion of global health activities in Norway. The representatives of the Board in the report period are:

Jon Øyvind Odland NTNU; Andrea Winkler and Katerini Storeng, University of Oslo; Bente E. Moen, University of Bergen; Nils Daulaire, The Arctic University of Norway, UiT; Frode Forland, Norwegian Institute of Public Health; Arne H. Eide, Sintef; Gunilla Kulla, Nord University and Dawit Shawel Abebe, OsloMet. Moen has been Chair in the project period, with Forland as vice-Chair.

Substitute board members: Mahima Venkateswaran and Håkon Bolkan.

Observers in the board meetings have been Karine Kålsås and Zlata Turkanovic, Research Council of Norway (RCN); Ingvar T. Evjen Olsen, Norad, Elisabeth Darj/Elin Dvergsdal, Research School of Global Health.

2.3 Secretariat

Forum has a Secretariat located at Centre for International Health (CIH), University of Bergen (UiB). This Secretariat has been joint with the Secretariat for Global Health Norway (GHN) in 2019, and run by Gunhild Koldal at CIH, UiB. In 2020, the responsibility for GHN was moved from UiB to NTNU. It has taken some time to move the activities of GHN to NTNU, and in this transition period, Koldal has continued the Forum tasks. This has been useful since Moen and Koldal work at the same place (CIH).

The Forum secretariat performs the following tasks:

- * Running the daily activities of the secretariat and supporting the Chair and the Board members
- * Preparation for Board meetings and the General Assembly
- * Writing of and distribution of minutes
- * Registration of members, running the membership database
- * Writing and distribution of newsletters
- * Maintaining the Forum website
- * Responding to inquiries and attending to Forum's correspondence
- * Contributing to the organization of the global conferences.
- * Run the account system and budgeting for Forum

2.4 Board meetings

In 2019, Forum had 10 board meetings, and in 2020, 4. Most meetings have been held online, and had from 6 to 13 participants. Forum had one physical meeting in Oslo on October 16 (9 persons present), where strategies and plans for Forum were developed.

The meetings always give the participants the possibility of informing about their activities, and this is important for the networking in the group.



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The minutes from the meetings can be found on the website:

<https://forumglobalhealth.w.uib.no/minutes/>

2.5 Conferences

2019: Forum, together with GHN, organized the 2 days Global Health conference ‘Competence building for impact – time for revolution’, at Hotel Scandic Bergen City in Bergen. The conference had about 120 participants.

2020: In 2019 and 2020, Forum Board members participated in different committees for planning the Globvac2020 conference, and the Forum secretariat administered the abstracts submitted to this conference. The conference was planned to be arranged by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health on behalf of RCN, in co-operation with Forum and Global Health Norway. This conference was postponed due to the coronavirus situation.

2.6 Lack of funding of global health research in Norway – Forum actions

Funding in Global Health has been reduced substantially the past years, and Forum finds the situation alarming. This has been a topic for the Forum board the past years. Forum has contributed to the public discussion on this topic, by the following activities:

- Moen represented Forum in a dialogue meeting on global development in the RCN 21/8-19.
- Forland and Storeng represented Forum in an open Stortingshøring, 21/10-19, asking for funding for global health research to be put in the National Budget of Norway 2020.
- The same question was presented in written in Bistandsaktuelt, 08.11 2019.

<https://www.bistandsaktuelt.no/arkiv-kommentarer/2019/viktig-med-global-helseforsikring/?fbclid=IwAR1gefSIKz4jMu2-w9dxVqEsSjceq9bcP1YRrApBF8cNU8eo1jjHdLxiqEw>

-Forum provided a text for RCN in February 2020, with comments to their strategy document, pointing out the lack of focus on global health research.

2.7 Norwegian Research School

The Research School of Global Health (RSGH) was established in 2016, after an application to RCN, sent from Forum board members with NTNU as the coordinator. The RSGH has been very successful and has now about 140 members (PhD candidates). Forum has a close co-operation with this unit. The RSGH is an observer in the Forum board meetings.

2.8 Co-operation with Global Health Norway

The Forum was involved in the process of developing the Global Health Norway network, which was established in 2017. GHN has a board with representatives from nine member institutions: the 4 universities, the 4 regional health authorities and the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. The Forum chair is an observer in the GHN board. The relationship between the two units is expressed in the Statutes of Forum: One of the objectives of Forum is to be the autonomous advisory body to Global Health Norway and other institutions on policy formulation and scientific input.

In 2019 Forum and GHN had a joint secretariat. The two units co-operate on their web-pages (www.globalhealth.no and <https://forumglobalhealth.w.uib.no/>).



2.9 Newsletter

Forum made one Newsletter in December 2019.

3. International co-operation

The Forum is a member of The Federation of European Societies for Tropical Medicine and International Health ([FESTMIH](#)). Forum has participated in three FESTMIH board meetings in the project period, and has been engaged in the planning of European conferences arranged by FESTMIH. The last conference was in Liverpool in 2019, and the next one will be in Bergen, Norway in 2021. Forum was asked to organize the 2021 conference, but it is difficult for Forum to take this type of responsibility. After discussions in the Forum board, it was suggested that the University of Bergen should take this responsibility.

4. Financial report

The finances of Forum are run by the account system of CIH, UiB.

2019

1th Jan 2019, Forum had 62764 NOK

Expenses in 2019

- Print of brochure 13 656 NOK
- Travels to board meeting 18 719 NOK

2020

Per 1/1 -2020, Forum had 30 389 NOK. Forum has had no expenses in 2020 so far.

The economic situation has been discussed in the Board, and an application for support has been sent to GHN. GHN will pay Forum 75 000 NOK for the advisory help in 2020.

Budget 2020

- Travel to a 2 days board meeting for all board members 75 000
- Travels to represent Forum in other meetings 25 000
- Unexpected expenses 5 389

5. Way forward

The plans for Forum are presented in a separate Activity plan.

Bergen, 14th May 2020/B.E. Moen