Annual Report
2016

Bringing together Heart Foundations across Africa

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Message from the President

The African Heart Network (AHN) has been in existence now for over 15 years. It was set up in 2001 by eminent persons who felt it was time the voice of Africa was heard formally on cardiovascular disease (CVD) matters. Since its creation AHN has been growing in order to reposition itself as a key player in the implementation and monitoring of targets in Africa with regard to non-communicable diseases (NCD) and CVD prevention. Despite the difficulties, AHN has succeeded in reaching that goal. In addition, it has succeeded in improving its visibility not only in the African continent but also in the outside world, by establishing solid links and coalitions with international organizations such as the World Heart Federation (WHF), World Health Organization, European Heart Network and others.

But, a lot remains to be achieved in order to make AHN an even stronger organization. We hope 2017 will be an even more prosperous year for AHN, with more engagement from country member foundations, more countries joining AHN and more visible actions to achieve the common target of 25 by 25.

Professor Habib Gamra
I joined AHN as Executive Secretary in March 2016 and it has been an exciting and busy year for us. We kicked off the year with some re-branding by creating a fresh new corporate identity and brochure to showcase our network. AHN was involved in various meetings and congresses where we represented our network and members. We hosted a stand at the World Cardiology Congress in Mexico City where we were able to network with our members and other delegates to raise interest regarding our work and further recruit new members. We make use of these regional and global platforms to advocate for CVD prevention on the African continent. We were also fortunate to present our recent research on the availability of essential medicines in Africa.

We continue to drive awareness and education campaigns in our member countries and World Heart Day remains a key calendar event. As AHN we want to further embrace the use of social media so we have launched our AHN Facebook group as a platform to network with fellow members, share best practices and inspire each other. We encourage everyone to join our group and start sharing! We are also busy with re-designing our website and hope to launch early in 2017.

During the course of the year we have become members of the International Council of Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (ICCPR) and the Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association (PCNA) to further increase our reach, networking potential and ability to share valuable resources with our members. I want to thank our Executive Committee for their continued hard work to keep our network active and for every member who has actively engaged with us and who are continuing their great CVD prevention work in their respective countries. Here’s to a prosperous 2017!

Christelle Crickmore
Who we are

The African Heart Network (AHN) is a coalition of heart foundations, cardiac societies and individuals working in the field of cardiovascular disease (CVD) in Africa.

The AHN was founded in 2001 by African heart health professionals to provide a platform and a voice for civil society on CVD issues in Africa. We are part of the global CVD community through our membership of the World Heart Federation (WHF). We work towards the improvement of the health of Africans through better detection, treatment and prevention of CVD.

AHN is a registered non-profit company with its headquarters in Cape Town, South Africa.

Why we exist

The global burden of CVD continues to grow as it remains a leading cause of mortality and morbidity worldwide including in Africa. Tackling CVD in Africa is a major challenge for development, as CVD result in significant health, social, financial and other consequences for those affected. Furthermore, CVD contributes to the social divide as it tends to affect predominantly poor and disadvantaged population subgroups.

The World Health Organization projects that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in Africa will overtake all other causes of death by 2030 in all regions. Of the NCDs, CVD is the leading cause of disability and death, responsible for 17 million global deaths annually. Globally, deaths due to NCDs are expected to increase by 17% over the next ten years, with the greatest increase (27%) in the African region. CVD - mainly ischemic heart disease and stroke, contribute to the largest share of NCDs in Africa, largely due to the increasing prevalence of tobacco use, hypertension and diabetes. In addition, cardiomyopathy and rheumatic heart disease are also major concerns in the African region, requiring a diverse set of strategies to fight CVD on the African continent.
Vision and mission

The AHN’s vision is to play a leading role in the prevention and reduction of the burden related to CVD, including heart disease and stroke, so that it will no longer be the major cause of premature death and disability throughout Africa.

Our mission is to:

- Increase networking related to CVD prevention and control among African countries.
- Advocate for increased awareness regarding the prevention and control of CVD in Africa and strategies to reduce it.
- Spearhead policies and programmes to promote cardiovascular health in the whole population and among high risk individuals.
- Promote heart healthy lifestyles throughout the life course in all individuals.
- Disseminate and promote research findings related to NCDs and specifically CVD in Africa.
- Advocate for increased access to health care for patients with CVD and those at risk of CVD.
Our achievements

Education and awareness campaigns

Our education and awareness efforts on the continent are mainly focused on developing activities for World Heart Day (WHD), rheumatic heart disease and CVD risk factors (e.g. lack of physical activity, unhealthy lifestyles, salt reduction, tobacco use, hypertension and diabetes). Various activities are implemented by our members in light of these campaigns and include amongst others advertising, community mobilization, screening and interpersonal communication.

World Heart Day

South Africa: The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSFSA) annually celebrates Heart Awareness Month during September, which includes a month filled with activities building up to the culmination on WHD. Throughout the month of September 2016, the HSFSA offered free screening within communities and leveraged the media to reach the masses to get tested. In addition, the HSFSA partnered with Dis-Chem Pharmacies to assist with people screened during the month at no charge. Additional activities included Heart Age Screenings live on air with DJ’s of community and commercial radio stations to engage the public and get them interested in their own heart age including being aware of their blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol results. In total 32 388 people were screened during September with the total value of media exposure reaching 906 000 USD. The HSFSA in partnership with WHF and the South African Heart Association celebrated WHD by lighting Table Mountain up in red as a sign of solidarity in the fight against CVD.
Nigeria: The Nigerian Heart Foundation celebrated WHD in collaboration with several organizations. Power oil, a vegetable oil company, in partnership with the Nigerian Heart Foundation and Olaniba Heart Foundation Lagos conducted blood pressure screenings for the public. Royal Philips, a leading health technology company launched an online educational platform which is expected to create awareness on a healthy heart lifestyle. Guarantee Trust Bank, (GTB) a foremost Bank in Nigeria placed a full page advertisement in a National newspaper, the Punch Newspaper to extol the virtues of a healthy heart with coverage of about 40 000 readers. Emzor, a prominent Pharmaceutical industry placed a full page advertisement in Guardian newspaper, a major media print organization with a National coverage, to mark the 2016 WHD celebration.

Tunisia: Celebrations of the Tunisian Heart Foundation included an international symposium on CVD prevention with the participation of several stakeholders, including government officials from the ministry of health. The following day there was a marathon with free screenings: blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol. Mass media were present in great numbers, to promote the event. The governor of Monastir and representatives of the ministry of health were the officials representing government at all WHD activities.

Seychelles: The Ministry of Health organized high-profile events around WHD. WHO experts and several national experts with high officials of ministry of health (including the Minister of Health, principal secretary and CEO of hospital services) attended a multi-sectoral stakeholders’ meeting to discuss fiscal measures to promote healthy nutrition, with a particular focus on measures to reduce sugar consumption. Other meetings were organized with high officials of ministry of finance and representatives of other sectors. There were also several programs regarding CVD on national radio and television.

Kenya: The Kenyan-Heart National Foundation celebrated WHD in partnership with the Kenyan Cardiac Society with various health promotion activities.
Rwanda: The Rwanda Heart Foundation (RHF) and the Rwanda Pharmaceutical Students Association organized a full day event in celebration of WHD, including a health walk (154 people), free blood pressure, BMI and diabetes screening (216 people screened) as well as CVD prevention education. A media campaign was also implemented featuring local and national radios, social media and articles in newspapers.

Since May 2016, Kigali City organizes a monthly *Car Free Day* with mass sports in the main roads of the city, including walking, running, cycling, duathlon and Gym Tonic. The RHF in collaboration with the other members of the Rwanda NCD Alliance, organizes a mass screening for volunteers after the sports, including blood pressure, blood sugar, BMI and eye tests. Education materials on NCDs are also distributed. To date, at least 10 000 people have been screened and a project is underway to extend the *Car Free Day* initiative to other cities in Rwanda.

**CVD News and Research Updates**

AHN endorses the HSFSA’s CVD News and Research Updates. These fortnightly updates provide a summary and link to the latest news, research, best practices and international standards relating to CVD and is shared by the HSFSA to a database of healthcare professionals, medical societies, academic institutions and organizations involved in public health. AHN is proud to share this great resource with its members as well.

**Research**

AHN aims to support or lead research related to CVD with a focus on operational and translational research. During 2014 - 2015 the AHN conducted a survey in 9 countries to assess the availability of equipment, guidelines and medicines for the diagnosis and management of CVD and diabetes at primary healthcare level. Countries included Burundi, Niger, Uganda, Benin, Kenya, Sudan, Tunisia, South Africa and Seychelles. Results of the survey were presented at different meetings including the World Cardiology Congress in Mexico City in 2016 and the research team is working on submitting an article for publication in a scientific journal, as well as planning phase 2 of the survey.
Raising AHN visibility

AHN launched its Facebook group in 2016 to share information on CVD prevention in Africa between AHN members on this free platform. The Facebook group, accessed through https://www.facebook.com/groups/africanhn, is an easy way for all members to share pictures, videos and updates of national and other activities. The group administrator is the Executive Secretary who grants access to the group only to members of AHN and our partners and sponsors ensuring a secure platform for networking. This sharing of knowledge and information is critical for the growth of AHN membership and also for visibility on a global platform.

To showcase the network and further raise visibility of AHN, a new AHN brochure was developed and we aim to launch a revamped website in 2017.

Congresses and meetings

AHN aims to network with like-minded individuals and organizations at key congresses and meetings to share learnings and best practice in CVD prevention and reduction in Africa. AHN organizes workshops and meetings where experts report on prevention of CVD, including heart health promotion campaigns and the results of recent research.

Cardio-Luxor Egypt

The Egyptian Society of Cardiology invited AHN to participate in the Cardio-Luxor meeting that takes place annually in the famous Egyptian city of Luxor. AHN’s participation consisted of a dedicated session on CVD prevention in Africa with lectures given by AHN members and speakers from the Egyptian Society of
Cardiology board. It was a great opportunity for networking and for making AHN known in Egypt and other middle eastern countries.

World Congress of Cardiology and Cardiovascular Health

As a member of the WHF, AHN had a strong presence at the World Congress of Cardiology and Cardiovascular Health (WCC) in 2016.

The aim was to ensure that AHN was visible as a key organization working towards CVD reduction in Africa with valuable experience and knowledge to share on a global platform.

AHN had a highly visible booth enabling us to network and capture details of delegates interested in our work. We handed out our newly developed brochures and print outs of the essential medicines research in the form of a poster presentation.

Three of our members were represented in the WHF arena:

- Christelle Crickmore – Salt Watch campaign example of South Africa
- Prof. Joseph Mucumbitsi – World Heart Day in Rwanda
- Elizabeth Gatumia’s presentation on WHD activities in Kenya and ‘Make a healthy heart your goal’ was presented on her behalf.

The AHN’s essential medicines survey with lead author Dr Pascal Bovet was proudly presented by Profs Joseph Mucumbitsi and Habib Gamra during the relevant poster session. For the duration of the congress the poster was also put up in the AHN booth.

AHN and the Pan-African Society of Cardiology (PASCAR) hosted a joint session entitled: “Combating Cardiovascular Disease in Africa” including a presentation on AHN’s survey regarding the availability of essential medicines in nine African countries.
AHN further participated during the WHF global summit on circulatory health 2016 and our President, Prof Habib Gamra signed the Mexico Declaration on Circulatory Health showing AHN’s support. At the WHF member sessions, Prof. Joseph Mucumbitsi presented on AHN’s activities especially around WHD.

**WHO AFRO Regional Consultation**

During October, Profs Habib Gamra and Joseph Mucumbitsi attended the WHO AFRO Regional Consultation in Mauritius, the main aim being the launch of a civil society consultation regarding the prevention and control of NCDs.

**Global Cardiovascular Nursing Leadership Forum (GCNLF)**

The Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association (PCNA) International Committee, along with individuals and organizations from across the globe, have come together to create the Global Cardiovascular Nursing Leadership Forum (GCNLF).

Recognizing that nurses and nursing organizations are on the front lines of patient education, the primary goal of the GCNLF is to promote nurses as leaders in the prevention of the global CVD epidemic through engagement and mobilization of the international nursing community.

Upon invitation, Christelle Crickmore attended the GCNLF during October 2016 in Barcelona, Spain, representing AHN, networking with participants and exploring opportunities for AHN and PCNA to work together in future, recognizing the importance of nurses in CVD prevention and treatment in Africa.
Partners and sponsors

We aim to partner with like-minded organizations who share our vision and mission. We believe in mutually-beneficial partnerships resulting in the improved health of the public we serve.

We are a member of:
- World Heart Federation (WHF)
- World Action on Salt and Health (WASH)
- International Council of Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (ICCPR)
- Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association (PCNA)

Christelle Crickmore at the GCNLF organized by PCNA
Membership

Membership to the AHN is open to heart foundations and CVD societies committed to the accomplishment of our vision and mission. Membership fees are paid directly to the WHF, is based on the GDP of the member country and ranges between 300 and 1 700 Swiss Francs per year.

Being a member of AHN enables foundations and societies to become part of an established African network fighting against CVD in Africa and enables access to shared scientific knowledge. AHN further provides opportunities:

- To profile foundation’s work throughout Africa and beyond through the AHN and WHF network.
- To engage with all member countries for networking, growth and support opportunities. During 2016 we sponsored seven AHN members to join the World Cardiology Congress in Mexico City and participate in the AHN annual general meeting.
- To funding relevant CVD programmes or research in member countries at the Board’s discretion. Through the essential medicines survey, 9 AHN members were funded to implement the survey in their respective countries.

Current members include:

- Cameroon Heart Foundation
- Uganda Heart Research Foundation
- Seychelles – Individual membership
- Ghana Society of Hypertension and Cardiology
- Kenyan-Heart National Foundation
- Mauritius Heart Foundation
- Ivorian Heart Foundation
- Ethiopian Heart Association
- The Heart Foundation of Zimbabwe
- Heart Foundation of Mozambique
- Nigerian Heart Foundation
- Rwanda Heart Foundation
- Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa
- Sudan Heart Foundation
- Tunisian Heart Foundation
- Zambia Heart Foundation
- National Heart Foundation of Tanzania
AHN funds are mainly derived from member countries’ annual contributions and support from the WHF.

AHN further sources funds through partnerships with other organizations, including pharmaceutical companies and is keenly assessing what other opportunities of sponsorship and funding exist.

Together with the payment of administrative expenses, AHN mainly utilizes its funds to sponsor member countries’ representatives to the World Congress of Cardiology which takes place bi-annually in different countries/continents. Selective sponsorship of AHN representatives to international conferences/meetings has been considered when funds permit and the meeting is deemed beneficial by the Executive Committee.

AHN has recently undertaken the funding of research projects in member countries as previously described and plans to continue engaging in more research projects when funding permits.

African Heart Network NPC
(Registration number 2013/197230/08)

Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2014

Figures in US Dollar

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### Current assets

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### Equity and liabilities

#### Equity

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#### Trade and other payables

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### Total equity and liabilities

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total equity and liabilities</td>
<td>60 534</td>
<td>58 565</td>
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Executive committee

The AHN executive committee meets by teleconference on a monthly or bi-monthly basis and is responsible for the strategic direction of the network and financial governance. In line with our constitution we hold an annual general meeting once a year, open to all members of AHN.

Prof. Habib Gamra
President of the African Heart Network
President of The Tunisian Heart Foundation
Chairman of PAFCIC
Head of the Cardiology Department Fattouma Bourguiba University Hospital Tunisia
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CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (Jan – Sept 2016)
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