



HEALTH-E NEWS

Journalism For Public Health

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

WORKING FOR SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY



Top: Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers protesting at the Far East Rand Hospital.

Bottom: Air pollution from a factory

HEALTH FOR ALL JOURNALISM FOR CHANGE

Albury Office Park
1 Magalieszicht Avenue
Dunkeld, 2196
Tel: (011) 880 0995

www.health-e.org.za
January 2024

Design: the earth is round
Printing: HANSA PRINT

Cover image:
People collecting water.

Introduction

About HEALTH-E news	3
Change and challenges	5
The future of journalism	7
Redefining public health	9

Focus of Work

Month-by-month focus areas	12
Board members and staff	14
Health-e news service NPC	16
Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2022	16

Where,
after all, do
universal
human rights
begin? In
small places,
close to home.

Eleanor Roosevelt

A humanitarian aid nurse
putting on surgical gloves.



Introduction

ABOUT HEALTH-E NEWS

Health-e News Service has been serving South Africans as a non-profit news agency that provides public health news to mainstream media publications since 1999. At the heart of the organisation is ensuring that the voices and concerns of people that are typically excluded from mainstream media are heard and addressed.

A unique feature and attribute of the organisation is its national footprint, established through its network of citizen journalists. Health-e journalists are based in rural villages and small towns throughout the country and as a result, the organisation has been able to build a track record of credibly relating stories that capture the realities of the most marginalised amongst ordinary South Africans.

The **VISION** of Health-e News is “to provide media products that are aimed at promoting a better quality of life for all in the southern African region.” The organisation pursues this vision through its **MISSION**, which is “to investigate, report and follow up on public health issues in southern Africa to educate and empower people to make healthy choices, hold decision makers continuously accountable and promote debate.”

Through our work, we are striving for a country envisaged in the Constitution, where people are treated equally and with dignity, and everyone has access to healthcare, healthy food, clean water and social security.

OUR VALUES

We are an organization that leads based on feminist principles and values. We are also an organization that adheres to the following values and principles:

- We ascribe to journalistic values of transparency, fairness, integrity, accuracy, ethical, responsible and credible reporting;
- We are committed to ensuring that our stories reflect the realities of the most vulnerable;
- We seek to elevate the voices of marginalised people and users of the public health care system; and
- We believe that poor people have agency and decision makers are also people living in marginalised communities who catalyse change and community activism.

The vision of Health-e News is “to provide media products that are aimed at promoting a better quality of life for all in the southern African region.”

Just because
it is a norm,
does not make
it right.

This is the ethos and
essence of Health-e,
it looks to expose,
campaign and lobby
for the issues that
we have become
accustomed too, but
should never accept.

A person standing in
line to collect water.



Chairperson's Report

CHANGE AND CHALLENGES

The 2022 -2023 Health-e News report captures a moment in South Africa's constant journey of transition.

The issues facing South Africa are no secret; it is battling challenges from infrastructure decay, corruption and ineptitude. Within this is also the constant fight for excellence, where mediocrity has become the default setting.

Like South Africa, Health-e news is not immune to these challenges. 2023 has been a year for taking stock, reflecting and plotting a new course for Health-e based in the legacy it has achieved over the 20 years of service.

We can say with pride programmes like OurHealth operated by citizen journalists across the country, gives the most comprehensive insights of health news from areas often left out of traditional news sources.

This includes Ndivhuwo Mukhwevo's story of 69 year old Elizabeth Masinge from Giyane having to walk for a kilometre to collect water every day. Normally this would not be news in that this is a norm in many places in South Africa. Just because it is a norm, does not make it right. This is the ethos and essence of Health-e, it looks to expose, campaign and lobby for the issues that we have become accustomed too, but should never accept. The likes of Elizabeth Masinge depend on Health-e to tell her story, in order to make a difference in her life and many others like her.

That is why Health-e News has opted to renew its board by bringing in a number of specialists like Dr Gavin George, an economist and behavioural scientist specialising in health systems research bases at UKZN, along with Dr Candice Bailey the Strategic Initiatives Editor at The Conversation Africa, where she trains academics how to



write for the media and works on science communication projects that creates awareness of the product among researchers and academics.

We thank current board members veteran health journalist Zama Buthelezi for insights and contributions in the quality of journalism along with chartered accountant, Kgaogelo Mohlala whose direction in governance and fund raising cannot be praised enough.

Above all we would like to thank the outgoing board members for their time and involvement along with their steadfast commitment to values; Dr Laura Perreira, though based out of SA, made valuable insights bringing the organisation through a troubling period. Cynthia Stimpel's life experience and commitment to good governance is a beacon of inspiration in a troubling time in SA. Her values permeate through Health-e and we hope she will be a constant resource to the organisation despite stepping down.

Above all we would like to thank our former chair Dr Dinesh Billiah, her stewardship through a troubling period is nothing but exemplary. Guided by her professionalism, values and pursuit of excellence is key to Health-e News lifting the benchmark of community health reporting.

To the former longstanding Managing Editor, Kerry Cullinan and all those who contributed over the years, we have nothing but gratitude to the organisation you have created and can only hope to emulate your success.

Lance Claasen

Our mission goes beyond reporting; it encompasses a dedication to fostering public understanding of health issues, empowering communities with knowledge, and holding institutions accountable for the well-being of all.

Surgeons at Sebokeng Hospital have performed the facility's first brain surgery in over four decades.



Managing Editor's Report

THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM

'Journalism has a funding crisis.' 'South Africa is facing a financial crisis.' 'There's a looming health system crisis.' 'Civil society NGOs are in crisis.'



At every conference and gathering I've attended in the past year, these are the common refrains. And yet, there's also hope matched with action. In last year's report, I wrote that resilience defined the preceding period of the pandemic. In a time of crisis, our spirit is even more resilient.

We find ourselves at a critical juncture where journalism faces unprecedented challenges, and non-profits grapple with the complexities of sustaining their missions while navigating financial uncertainties and resource constraints.

It's been a challenging year at Health-e, and also one of growth and progress. As we developed our strategic plan for 2023-2026, we had an existential reckoning and asked ourselves if there's a need for Health-e to continue to exist. The answer was a resounding yes. In an era marked by information overload, there remains a dearth of reliable health information. The role of a dedicated health journalism publication like Health-e News has never been more crucial.

Our three year plan is clear in its commitments-to continue to deliver quality health journalism, make our content more accessible and relatable to underserved audiences, and expand our reach to Southern Africa.

Journalism is a public good, and public health journalism lies squarely in the public's interest. We are one of five niche health publications in South Africa, and we all serve a specific purpose, reaching different audiences, with some overlap. Our team of citizen journalists continue to shed light on the state of healthcare in their communities, while our reporters tell a bigger story.

As we reflect on the past year, it is clear that our team's dedication, passion, and hard work have made a significant

impact on our mission to provide high-quality, accessible health journalism.

In the face of these challenges, Health-e News stands as a beacon of integrity, committed to delivering accurate, timely, and impactful health journalism. Our mission goes beyond reporting; it encompasses a dedication to fostering public understanding of health issues, empowering communities with knowledge, and holding institutions accountable for the well-being of all.

As we reflect on the past year, we recognize the tireless efforts of our journalists, contributors, and supporters who have made it possible for Health-e News to thrive. Yet, the road ahead demands innovation, resilience, and adaptability. To ensure the continuation of our vital work, we must embrace new models of sustainability, leverage technology to amplify our reach, and forge partnerships that strengthen our impact.

The importance of health journalism extends beyond the headlines; it shapes public perception, informs policy decisions, and, ultimately, contributes to the well-being of societies.

In this annual report, we invite you to explore the milestones, challenges, and aspirations that define our journey. Together, let us chart a course forward, one that not only ensures the survival of health journalism but propels it into a future where it continues to serve as a cornerstone of informed, empowered, and healthier communities.

Thank you for your unwavering support.

Managing Editor, Bibi-Aisha Wadvalla

As health
journalists
we are uniquely
positioned to make
sense of how politics,
economics as well as
climate change affect
people's health and
our over quality of life.

Healthcare workers giving
a baby a check-up.



News Editor's Report

REDEFINING PUBLIC HEALTH

Joining Health-e News in August 2023 has been a massive shift both professionally and personally.

This is an organisation that sparked my interest in health journalism, and the reporters at this organisation have over the years shown me generosity whenever I needed advice. I hope to pay this forward.

Like many organisations we're slowly recovering from the COVID hangover and trying to find the best and most efficient way to stay on top of the news cycle while also producing agenda-setting journalism.

This is an opportunity for us to reimagine the ideal newsroom. This will foster the collaboration needed as we take the next steps towards the brand of journalism we want to pursue.

Health-e has a rich legacy in the South African media landscape and we are going to build on that. The citizen journalism programme is a flagship of the organisation, over the next year we will go on a targeted drive to increase the number of journalists who are part of the programme. The stories emerging from OurHealth are an important

reflection of the lives of ordinary people and they need to be presented on as big a stage as possible.

As health journalists we are uniquely positioned to make sense of how politics, economics as well as climate change affect people's health and our over quality of life. As Health-e moves in this new direction we are keen to expand on the quantity as well as the quality of health journalism news. We also aim to bring this news to non-English speaking audiences. Collaboration within our newsroom as well as working with external partners will be critical to making this vision a reality.

A big event on the 2024 calendar is the national and local government elections. It is the role of journalists to highlight the importance of casting the vote. This should be done by - at every possible turn - unpacking the role of national government in people's everyday lives. At the same time the functions of provincial and local governments need to be highlighted and scrutinised.



As health journalists we are uniquely positioned to make
sense of how politics, economics as well as climate
change affect people's health and our over quality of life.



Policies made
by national
governments,
and the actions of
local authorities can
impact on how people
are affected by events,
not of their own doing.

Litter on the side of the road.

News Editor's Report (continued)

To achieve this, we need to make a conscious effort to explain how policy guides the services citizens are entitled to. In the same breath we need to emphasise the determinants of health beyond the healthcare system. At the time of writing this report, world leaders are gathered in Dubai for the United Nations climate change conference - COP28, and health is taking centre stage. This year's conference had a "Health Day" - the first one ever at a COP. This is to highlight how climate changes can severely impact people's lives and livelihoods through displacement or food insecurity driven by droughts or flooding, for example.

Policies made by national governments, and the actions of local authorities can impact on how people are affected by events, not of their own doing. Creating inclusive cities and investing in alternative energy sources are some of

these policies. In this context it is important to scrutinise the election manifesto of the various parties to inform votes that align with people's interests.

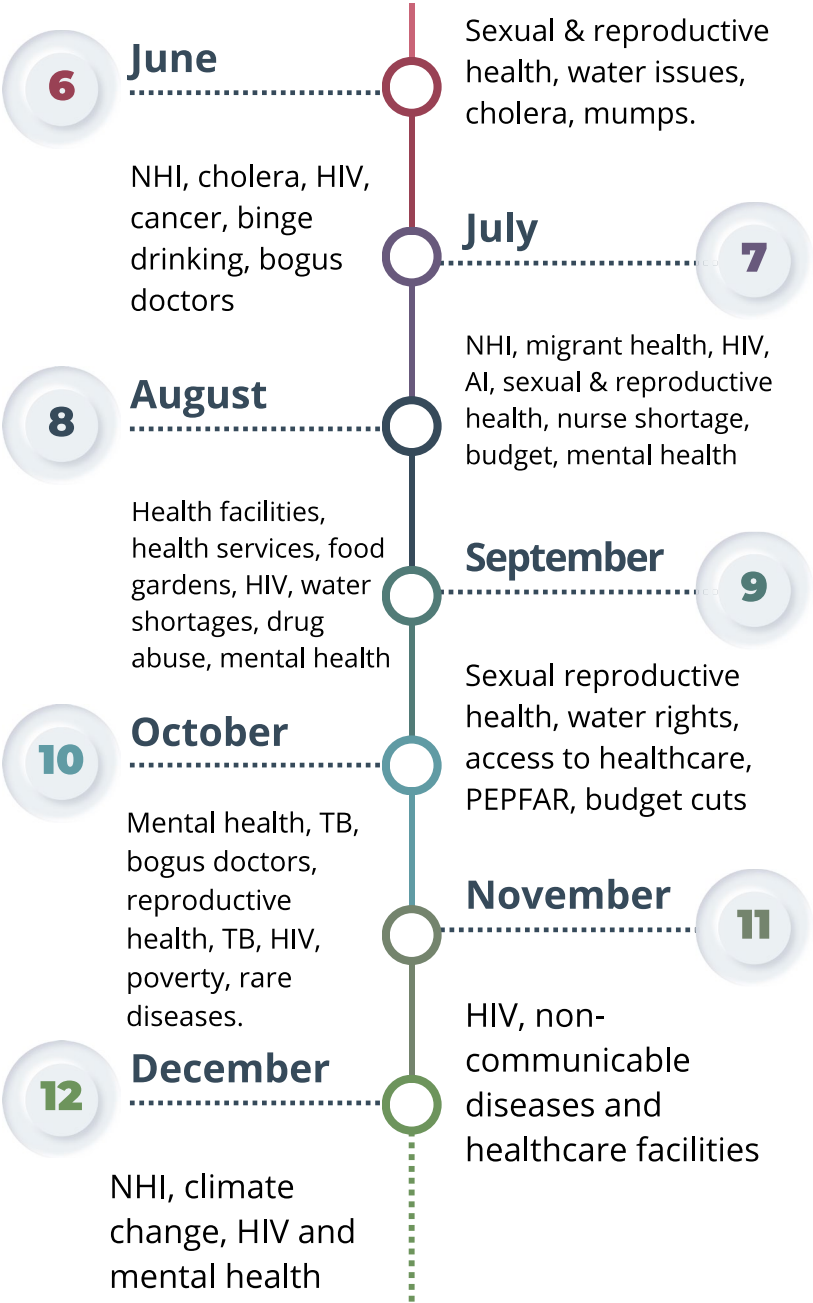
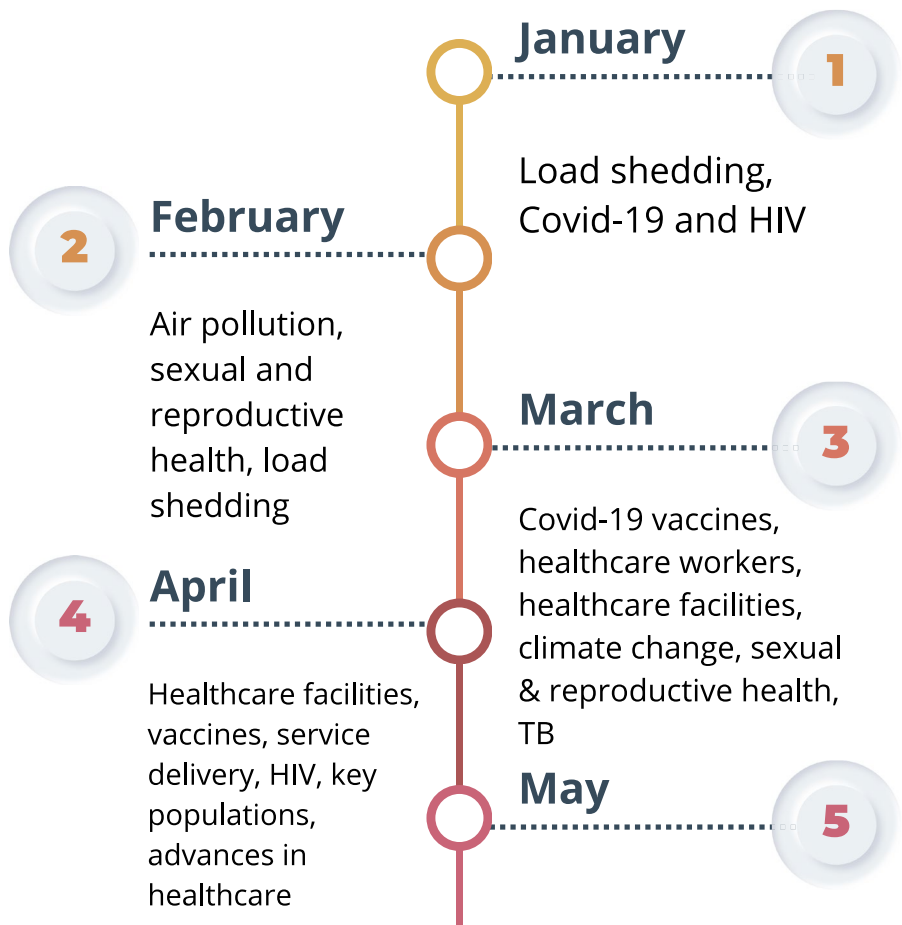
Beyond our journalistic output, Health-e - as all organisations do - needs to do some introspection. What type of work environment do we want to be? In what ways are we ensuring a non-threatening and inclusive environment where everyone feels safe? As part of the journalism fraternity we need to play an active role in challenging harmful practices in our industry - whether that is how we tell people's stories, or how reporters are treated in the field and on digital platforms.

2024 is an opportunity to recalibrate and redefine what journalism for public health is and what it looks like.

Ina Skosana

We need to make a conscious effort to explain how policy guides the services citizens are entitled to. In the same breath we need to emphasise the determinants of health beyond the healthcare system.

MONTH-BY-MONTH FOCUS AREAS



BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

(1 JULY 2021 – 30 JUNE 2022)

BOARD

This year we welcomed Dr Gavin George, Dr Candice Bailey and Dr Safura Abdool Karim to the Board. Unfortunately, Safura had to resign due to moving abroad. Cynthia Stimpel and Laura Perreira also resigned due to other commitments. Their contributions were invaluable and we appreciate their support in guiding Health-e forward.



Lance Claasen
(Chairperson)



Zama Buthelezi



Kgaogelo Derick
Mohlala



Dr Candice Bailey



Dr Gavin George



Cynthia Stimpel
(resigned November
2023)



Laura Perreira
(resigned July 2023)



Dr Safura Abdool
Karim (resigned
September 2023)

STAFF



Managing Editor:
Bibi-Aisha Wadvalla



News Editor:
Ina Skosana



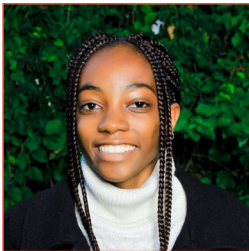
Office Manager:
Mapule Pholo



Reporter:
Ndivhuwo Mukhwevho



Multimedia Reporter:
Lilita Gcwabe



Junior Reporter:
Faith Mutizira

CITIZEN JOURNALISTS

Name	Province	District
Charlotte Mnguni	Mpumalanga	Nkangala District
Colen Seboholi-Mthembu	Free State	Lejweleputswa District
Esau Dlamini	Gauteng	City Of Johannesburg
Kagiso Keipopele	Kwa Zulu Natal	Ethekwini District
Molefi Sompane	Free State	Mangaung Metro
Pamela Madonsela	Gauteng	City Of Johannesburg
Precious Mashiane	North West	Bojanala District
Sandile Mbili	Kwa Zulu Natal	Ethekwini District
Teboho Setlofane	Northern Cape	Tsantsabane Municipality
Montsho Matlala	Limpopo	Capricon and Sekhukhune District
Mogale Mojela	Limpopo	Mopani District

HEALTH-E NEWS SERVICE NPC

(Registration number 2006/036113/08)

Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2022

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

FIGURES IN RAND	NOTE(S)	2022	2021
ASSETS			
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	2	9 719	56 037
CURRENT ASSETS			
Receivables		1178 991	1 094 762
Cash and cash equivalents	4	18 526 684	21 160 729
		19 705 676	22 255 491
TOTAL ASSETS		19 715 395	22 311 528
RESERVES AND LIABILITIES			
RESERVES			
Evaluation cost fund		142 480	142 480
Retrenchment fund		2 096 630	2 096 630
Sustainability fund		13 322 347	11 897 345
Operating reserves		2 000 000	2 000 000
		17 561 457	16 136 455
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Payables	5	298 506	352 789
Deferred income	6	1 855 432	5 822 285
		2 153 938	6 175 074
TOTAL RESERVES AND LIABILITIES		19 715 395	22 311 528

South African power lines against a smog-filled sunset.

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

Thank you to our donor, Open Society Foundation of South Africa
for their unwavering support.



Journalism For Public Health