



## Opening new channels to health

### A letter from the Executive Director

Dear friends,

Simply publishing a book is no longer enough to bring life-changing health information into the world. No matter how important the subject matter, or how easy-to-use the material, books are no longer the only way — or even the most common way — content is shared. Hesperian continues to respond to the ways people who depend on our resources access information. That's why we produce mobile apps, printed booklets, and everything in between.

And just as one format leads to another, each topic leads to another and the breadth of subjects Hesperian is called on to cover keeps expanding, and in more and more languages. This annual report provides you with a sense of the cornucopia of resources we have produced this past year.

In a normal world, producing such a range of accessible health materials would be enough of a challenge — but our world isn't normal. Attacks on women's rights in the US and internationally call for materials that help women take their reproductive futures into their own hands. Climate change introduces new threats to human health, and communities are searching for resources to equip

their response. As solutions to HIV, diabetes, cancer and diarrheal diseases come medically into reach, cuts in access to medicines and health services make Hesperian's actionable materials even more essential.

This is recognized by health workers training promoters under a tin roof in Colombia and by doctors training medical students at Baylor University, one of the largest medical schools in the world. *Where There Is No Doctor* accompanies Baylor's MDs in their Grand Rounds and community health workers in their daily rounds, because ours are the best practical tools to promote health found anywhere. Your ongoing support delivers crucial information to health promoters in Sierra Leone, garment workers in Bangladesh, midwives in Guatemala, and refugees on our southern border. We hope you're as proud of this reach as we are.

Warmly,



Sarah Shannon  
Executive Director  
Hesperian Health Guides



## We have an app for that

Hesperian, an app developer? That low-tech, do-it-yourself, rip-the-pages-you-need-from-the-book Hesperian? You bet. Now that more people have access to cell phones than to safe water or sanitation, it's only natural for Hesperian to develop digital channels to essential health information.

When we saw how Hesperian's digital HealthWiki information on women's health was the most sought out material of all 7,000+ content pages in 18 languages, we knew we were onto something. Searches for "safe abortion" skyrocketed in tandem with the attacks on women's health rights, and people throughout the world found on our site a way to overcome the information blockade.

Hesperian launched our Safe Abortion app in February 2019 after 2 years of extensive user testing in 11 countries. Almost 75% of participants were young people. The app is multilingual, launched in English, Spanish and French, with Igbo and Yoruba versions not far behind. It offers comprehensive, reliable information on all methods of safe abortion and gives explicit instructions on abortion with pills, a safe and effective method women can control themselves. Already users in 137 countries are turning to it for help, including thousands in the US, where we expect numbers of users to rise.

At the same time, we launched our Family Planning app! Our Digital Projects Manager was coding the back ends of 2 different apps in 3 languages each! This app is designed to support frontline health workers in providing family planning and counseling services. We are currently preparing a new version incorporating feedback from over 200 users in 12 countries.

These 2 apps join our award-winning Safe Pregnancy and Birth app, which was launched in English and Spanish in 2014, forming a trio of accessible, science-based, people-centered apps on sexual and reproductive health.

Our Managing Editor said recently: "They can't make knowledge illegal, no matter how hard they try." Hesperian's mission has always been to offer human-centered, reliable health information that all people can use to gain control over their lives. And now we can use phones to do that!

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*"I'm downloading the Safe Abortion app now. We're going to need it in Georgia."*

— M.P., Atlanta, GA, USA

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## A game-changer for child survival

Over 3 million children live with HIV worldwide. Millions more are affected by HIV in their families and communities. Stigma, abuse, trauma and poverty make HIV in a family particularly harmful for children, not only for their physical health, but also for their cognitive and social development.



When Hesperian launched *Helping Children Live with HIV* earlier this year, it was met with rave reviews from the dozens of community groups and health experts who contributed to its development. The book equips families, communities, and everyone concerned about child development to better confront the ongoing crisis of care faced by children in HIV-stricken communities. Packed with suggestions, techniques and stories, this book makes complex medical and psychosocial information understandable, while inspiring actions to ensure that all children, no matter their HIV status, can grow into healthy adults.

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*"Bold, comprehensive, community-centered care that focuses on solidarity, inclusion, and capability, not just infection. **Helping Children Live with HIV** challenges and enables us to do just that."*

— Eric Goosby, Director, UCSF Global Health Sciences and former US Global AIDS coordinator

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## RPCV + Hesperian

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) who served in Mali decided that *Where There Is No Doctor* just had to be available in Bambara, the local language spoken by over 10 million people. For 6 years, dozens of RPCVs organized, fundraised, and hustled to get this project off the ground, hiring Malian translators and working closely with Hesperian's editorial and design team. Hesperian and the Dokotoro project are proud to announce the Bambara edition of *Where There Is No Doctor* was delivered in 2019 to excited health promoters in Mali! "Matt Heberger and the Dokotoro crew made this a great example of Hesperian – RPCV collaboration!" celebrated Sarah Shannon, Hesperian Executive Director.

## Before the ink dries

Most people learn about Hesperian from *Where There Is No Doctor*, whether they use the latest edition or their tattered copy from the 1980s. While we started with print, Hesperian has ridden the wave of cultural and technological change. Unique among health publishers, we now offer print, digital, and mobile resources in dozens of languages!

Even before a new resource comes off the press, it begins to wend its way along diverse and elaborate paths to arrive at previously unreachable locations. Translations begin, content is redesigned and coded into HealthWiki pages, adapted booklets take shape, and we initiate the steps to make apps and ebooks possible. What begins as a single voice quickly becomes a chorus.

This year our HealthWiki exploded! Thanks to a generous grant, we were able to develop and launch 5 new chapters for the *New Where There Is No Doctor* in English and then have each translated into Chinese, Khmer, Bangla, Nepali, and Lao (along with free PDFs of these too). The result: the *New Where There Is No Doctor*, an extensive work-in-progress, already encompasses 16 chapters in English, 105 chapters in other languages, 92 PDFs, and 19 print booklets!

We also launched HealthWiki versions of the Spanish and Chinese editions of *Health Actions for Women*, several chapters of the French edition of *Where Women Have No Doctor*, a few chapters of French *Health Actions for Women*, and several chapters of the Chinese edition of *Workers' Guide to Health and Safety*.

Working with our partners has allowed us to develop and print a whole range of accessible, affordable booklets – doubling to 36 the number of booklets we now distribute! We launched a *Diabetes* booklet in Spanish, 2 booklets in Haitian Kreyol, and a *First Aid* booklet in Swahili. More booklets are being printed in Laos and Nepal, and a compendium of 9 chapters from the *New Where There Is No Doctor* is being produced in China.

And the apps! Producing an app is much more than taking content from our well-known resources and cramming it onto a tiny phone screen. The material has to be re-conceptualized to work in bite-sized pieces, and then tested to be sure it works the way we intended. Real users explore and field-test the beta version and share their crucial feedback on content, functionality, and navigation. Our *Safe Abortion* app was user-tested by over 180 people in the US, Latin America and Africa – 11 countries altogether; while our *Family Planning* app was reviewed by 16 focus groups in 12 countries. We continue to collect and implement feedback. For Hesperian, the whole point of an app is to combine reliability and usefulness with the agility and responsiveness of new technology.

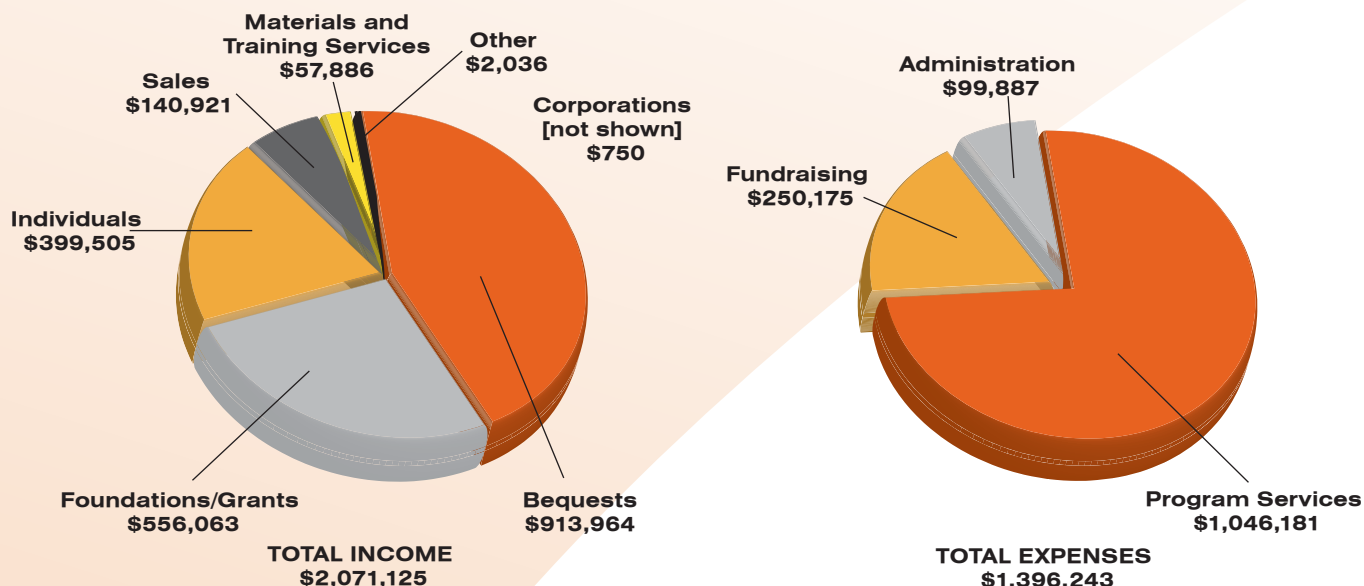
And we are still printing new books and updating every single one of our roster of titles. Our newest launch is *Helping Children Live with HIV*. Part of our *Early Assistance Series*, this practical and informative resource offers tools for parents and communities supporting the most vulnerable of our children (see the article on the previous page).

We recognize that none of our powerful resources matter much if they don't get to people, and to the right people: health activists ready to make change in their lives and in their communities. We rely on our networks, our donors, and on everyone who knew and loved perhaps just one book and now are delighted to discover how much more we produce each year.

**On August 13, 2018 Sister Aid Liberia shared the *Safe Pregnancy and Birth* app with more than 250 people in Monrovia.**



## Income and Expenses



## Momentous progress!

This year, we celebrate a new book, booklets, apps, translations and digital content thanks to your support! Please help us continue our work:

- A monthly gift automatically billed to your credit card makes giving easy.
- Visit Human Resources and see if your company offers a matching workplace-giving program.
- Show someone that you care by making a gift in their honor or buying them a book.
- Buy from us directly – it makes a difference!
- Give a gift in memory of someone special. We'll notify the family of your generosity.
- Create a lasting legacy. Name Hesperian in your will, insurance policy, retirement plan or trust.

## A legacy of support



This past year, Hesperian received a bequest from long-time donor and volunteer, Arthur Naiman. An experienced publisher himself, Arthur helped edit our annual reports, and his generosity supported the

development of many of our resources. His gift will continue to make a difference.

Hesperian Health Guides  
1919 Addison St., #304, Berkeley, CA 94704  
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## One book touches many lives

Seventy women from seventeen Zambian villages converge on their regional health center every month to borrow and discuss Hesperian books. They will share the materials they borrow with at least 40 others, extending the reach of these free materials sent by our Gratis Book Project to over 2,800 people. This year we were able to send just shy of 1,000 books thanks to \$15,000 in donations. But shipping costs consumed half of that! While we offer more and more digital and mobile resources, we know books are still needed. Thanks for your support!

## Why I give

Brinton Lykes first learned of *Where There Is No Doctor* in the 1980s, while working in Guatemala. As a psychologist, she appreciated its holistic approach to health and knew she had found a life-long partner in Hesperian. "You provide health information that values the wisdom of local people," she explains. Brinton gives to Hesperian and uses our materials – in Guatemala and elsewhere – because they work. She gladly got involved in the development of *Where Women Have No Doctor*, now in 14 languages! "Hesperian's resources provide valuable information for local communities to build social movements around health and human rights. I appreciate your longevity and will continue to support your work!"



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