

Welcome to the first monthly GEGA Newsletter!

The transition of GEGA from a collection of donor-sponsored activities to a cohesive international organization will require some changes, including clarification of organizational structures and responsibilities, the institution of democratic processes, transparency of activities and decisions, and proactive communication among all members, such as the webpage you see here.

The GEGA Newsletter, which will be distributed approximately each month, will serve a role in that effort, but there will be other, more interactive strategies to ensure transparency. We hope this first newsletter will serve as a sample, and encourage each of you to submit to the Secretariat information on activities, issues of interest, and discoveries you think GEGA Gauge and Network Members as well as GEGA Friends may find useful. In order to serve as a true resource for information exchange, the newsletter needs your direct input every month. Send comments to secretariat@gega.org.za.

The Newsletter is designed to be web-friendly and easy to navigate, and includes much more information than what is seen on the actual Newsletter by including links to documents and other webpages. **Please feel free at any time to submit suggestions on how to improve the Newsletter. Submit information to be included in next month's issue by the 20th.**

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GEGA Activities.

The Coordinator and the Coordinating Committee have been working hard over the past two months to initiate the formation of GEGA as an international organization. The Coordinator, Lexi Bambas, is on-board in Durban and working with the Coordinating Committee and with several other GEGA members to learn the history of the group, identify key activities, develop internal structures, and support the work of the Gauges. Several activities related to launching GEGA as an organization have been accomplished, including:

- Completion of [Report of the Uganda meeting](#), (The report of the meeting by the Uganda Gauges IPH has also been distributed by that team)
- May 22 conference call meeting of the Coordinating Committee. [View Minutes](#)
- Design of a GEGA [Logo](#)
- Development and printing of a [GEGA leaflet](#) which may be translated into various languages for use by the Gauges. Send comments, suggested changes, or requests for additional copies to the Secretariat.
- Completion of a [draft funding proposal](#), attached for your comments. The funding proposal includes an explanation of much of the Coordinating Committee's vision for the development of GEGA over the next two years. View funding proposal and budget narrative at <http://www.gega.org.za/download/newsvol1/gegafundprop.doc>
http://www.gega.org.za/download/newsvol1/budget_sn.doc
- Early-stage [GEGA webpage](#). Send suggestions and documents to [Secretariat](#).

Additionally, several other activities related to the internal development of GEGA have been initiated:

- Planning for a Coordinating Committee meeting in August. A [preliminary agenda](#), submitted for your comments and suggestions.
- Development of **internal policy**. A preliminary version of policies will be forthcoming soon, open for comments and additional suggested topics.
- Development of a **technical support strategy**, with Paula Braveman. If you have recommendations for the strategy, or if you have specific support needs, please send a note describing those needs to the Secretariat.

- Initial search for appropriate **technical consultants and resources**. If you have recommendations, please send them to the Secretariat.
- Work on developing a **Global Gauge** is expected in the next several months. Ideas can be sent to the secretariat.
- The initial concepts of a **Global Network** for GEGA, which would allow greater interaction between Gauge and non-Gauge activities, strategies, and capacity. If you know of non-GEGA individuals who would like to keep up with GEGA's activities and would be active network members, please have them send a request to the secretariat to be on GEGA's Network listserve.

Finally, there have been several activities to strengthen the external relations of the organization, especially focused on tools for use in health equity work.

- In April, GEGA was represented at a meeting on **Sub-National Health System Performance Assessment**, a WHO effort to develop strategies measuring inequalities within countries. View a [short report of the meeting](#)
- In May, Lexi attended a workshop in Cameroon on Norman Daniels' **Benchmarks of Fairness for Health Reform**, which may be of use to several of the Gauges. Work has already been planned with the Chilean Gauge and with BRAC in Bangladesh (a Gauge institution). Lexi will be helping with the development of a manual for applying the [Benchmarks](#), and **welcomes any Gauge experiences, comments, perceptions, examples of work, etc. that would be useful for the manual.**
- In June, representatives from nine Gauges, several Coordinating Committee members, and Lexi attended the International Society for Equity and Health (**ISEqH**) **Conference** in Toronto, Canada. Because many Gauges were present at the ISEqH meeting, it may be useful to consider building a GEGA activity or meeting around the next ISEqH meeting in 2004. In fact, GEGA has submitted a proposal for South Africa to host the next ISEqH meeting.
 - The meeting itself was not only an opportunity to learn about the activities and strategies of other groups around the world working on equity issues, but also revealed the potential importance of GEGA's and the Gauges role in ISEqH: specifically, there was a **strong desire expressed by members for more advocacy**, and organized advocacy, at multiple levels. More will be forthcoming on this issue in next month's newsletter, but ideas are welcome...
 - The **program of the 2002 meeting**, including presentation titles and the names of presenters, can be found at <http://www.iseqh.org/en/conf02/agenda.pdf>, and the ISEqH home page is <http://www.iseqh.org/index.html>. The program is available in English, Spanish, and French. If you were not able to attend the meeting and are interested in any of the presentation titles, send a request to the Secretariat and the abstract and presenter's contact information will be sent to you.
 - We also request that **any presentations made by the Gauges be sent to the [Secretariat](#)** and these will be distributed to the group in the next newsletter and placed on the GEGA website.
- **IDRC and PAHO sponsored a meeting** directly after the ISEqH meeting in Toronto, which presented several useful tools for health equity work, including tools for **Geographic Information Systems, Health Impact Assessments, and RAHEST** (which facilitates immediate visual analysis of geographic health information, and which the Chile Gauge will be investigating more in October). GEGA invites further exploration of these tools, and comments on their relevance to Gauge work. More information on their usefulness and application will be forthcoming.
- Other tools: The South East Public Health Observatory (SEPHO) has recently launched a prototype online tool to assist in understanding and measuring health inequalities and deprivation. Developed with Roy Carr-Hill and Paul Dixon, the tool is designed to be an easily navigable system for users to access information and support in the area of health inequalities. The toolkit has descriptions and directions for using various data sources and methodologies and includes links to data sources. It can be viewed at: <http://www.sepho.org.uk/HealthInequalities/carrhill/index.htm>.

Upcoming activities

One ongoing feature we would like to include in the Newsletter is a list of upcoming activities within each of the Gauges, and another of activities among external groups that might be of interest to GEGA members. Some activities may invite participation by individuals, while others may demonstrate

strategies. **Please submit a description of your upcoming activities, along with any web links**, to the Secretariat each month for inclusion in the next Newsletter.

We also hope that as the Newsletter becomes more widely circulated to other interested parties, this section will highlight GEGA's advocacy and community empowerment activities and support regional capacity building.

Gauge activities:

- July 2: Workshop on Equity in Ougadougou, Burkina Faso. [Program](#)
- July 18-19: Program on Civic Education on Health, sponsored by the Zimbabwe Equity Gauge team.
- August 12-17: [Seminar on Inequities in Health](#), Ecuador Gauge. Document in Spanish only.

Other activities of interest:

- July 15-19, 2002: Training on Health Impact Assessment in Liverpool, England. (Another Training session may be scheduled for December).
- February 4th-7th, 2003: [Conference on Women's Health and Rights In Africa](#), in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- March 2-April 13, 2003: [African Course in Health Social Science](#), in Cape Town, South Africa, with participation by lecturers from the University of the Western Cape, South Africa; Makerere University, Uganda; and the Medical Anthropology Unit, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Resources, documents, and websites related to Equity.

In addition to the ISEqH program, the following may be of interest:

- PAHO Equity Listserve. Provides information on publications, conferences/meetings, and other equity-related activities. As the listserv generates several messages every day, it may be useful for one person from each Gauge to subscribe. Archive of past documents from the listserv at <http://listserv.paho.org/Archives/equidad.html>. To subscribe to the listserv, contact Ana Lucia Ruggiero at ruqlucia@paho.org
- Document. Paula Braveman and Eleuther Tarimo in Social Science and Medicine: Abstract: "[Social inequalities in health within countries: not only an issue for affluent nations](#)". The link for the full-text document is also found at that site.
- Document: [Rating the Strength of Scientific Research Findings](#), published by The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Also available is the summary, full report, and fact sheet.
- Website and documents: **eHealth Innovation** focuses on issues related to the "conceptualization, design, development, application and evaluation of new ways of using existing or emerging Information Communication Technologies in the health sector." More information at http://www.uhnres.utoronto.ca/ehealth/html/home/eh_home.shtml.

Publishing opportunities

Because publication is a very useful and inexpensive way for GEGA to support external relationships and also engage in advocacy and capacity development, we will keep track of opportunities for Gauges to publish their work, and relay that information here. Please send equity-related opportunities you know of to the Secretariat. Current opportunities include:

- Open invitation: The on-line journal "**Population Health Metrics Electronic Journal**," published by BioMedCentral will begin publication in late July (disclosure: Lexi is on the editorial board). The journal includes regular sections on health inequalities and on summary measures. Because the journal is in an early state of development, there may be special opportunities for publication at this time. The journal follows standard BioMedCentral guidelines for format and preparation of manuscripts as set out on the website at www.biomedcentral.com. Please contact Lexi at lexi@gega.org.za or secretariat@gega.org.za for more information.
- Open invitation: **ISEqH** will soon launch a journal through BioMedCentral. Discussion of possible articles by GEGA as well as the Gauges could be initiated now.

Feedback from you!

In order to make the newsletter an effective forum for communication, we need **your participation**.

Please send your feedback to secretariat@gega.org.za by July 20th.

- Information relevant to the Newsletter, including upcoming equity activities by Gauges or other groups, publication opportunities, tools, documents and publications
- Expertise in Gauges and among outside contacts for capacity development and technical support. Send name, contact information, and area of expertise
- Comments on the agenda for the Coordinating Committee meeting in August.
- Ideas for a Global Equity Gauge (please summarize idea in one paragraph; ideas will be distributed for discussion)
- The names of individuals or organizations that might be interested in participating in GEGA's Global and/or Regional Networks
- Comments for manual on Benchmarks of Fairness
- Webpage improvements: general comments, specific recommendations, documents, pictures and links for inclusion
- Comments on the GEGA leaflet and draft funding proposal
- Ideas for coordination between GEGA and ISEqH
- Requests for abstracts from the ISEqH meeting
- Electronic versions of documents presented at the ISEqH meeting or for any other venue

See you next month..!

Next Month:

- * Reports on Coordinator visits to Gauges in Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Chile, and Zimbabwe
- * Initial draft of internal policies for GEGA, submitted for discussion
- * New Upcoming Activities, Resources, and Publishing Opportunities

Global Equity Gauge Alliance