



AMERICAN
INTERNATIONAL
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

STRATEGIC
PLAN

2022-2025

WHY BUILDING STRONG, SUSTAINABLE HEALTH SYSTEMS IS CRITICAL

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is that a disease outbreak in one part of the world can rapidly become a pandemic that threatens virtually every country, every community, and every individual in the world.

COVID-19 has also demonstrated that even in wealthy nations, existing public health systems continue to be unprepared to meet the onslaught of a pandemic while at the same time providing routine and emergency care for people in need. And, if healthcare systems in high-income countries have been stretched to the breaking point, imagine the overwhelming challenges faced by developing countries, such as those in Africa, a continent that bears approximately one-quarter of the world's disease burden, yet is home to just 3 percent of its health workforce.

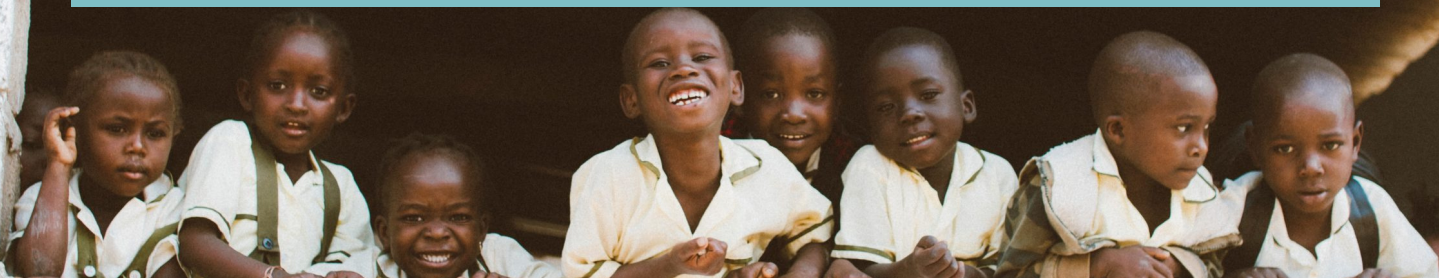
The reality is the world is facing an increasing gap in both the quantity and quality of healthcare workers required to address a multitude of individual and public health needs. Add the lack of investment in health systems – the underlying infrastructure and supply chains for equipment, consumables, medicines, and human capital alike – and the challenge is daunting. On top of this is the clear gap in health equity at the individual, community, national, and regional level.

AIHA: THE SOLUTIONS PARTNER FOR BUILDING SUSTAINABLE CAPACITY

At AIHA, we understand the challenges facing health systems. For the past 30 years, we have used that knowledge and experience to empower low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to develop sustainable solutions to achieve health equity and improved health outcomes. AIHA's vision is a world with access to quality healthcare for everyone, everywhere. Our mission is to strengthen health systems and workforce capacity through locally driven partnerships with sustainable solutions. We work to achieve this through health systems strengthening (HSS) projects, many of which focus specifically on designing and implementing sustainable programs for training human resources for health (HRH).

"Global health has seen tremendous progress around the world and building health systems capacity is paramount to sustain those gains and support countries' aspiration for universal health coverage. AIHA's important and timely mission aligns precisely with existing development needs"

– Dr. Ariel Pablos-Méndez, Professor of Clinical Medicine, Columbia University Medical Center, former Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Global Health, USAID



As a thought leader and solutions partner, AIHA marshals global resources and works closely with all stakeholders to develop and implement efficient, cost-effective health and social support programming. Our well-established, well-recognized technical assistance model uses comprehensive, integrated twinning partnerships, as well as other state-of-the-art technical assistance approaches, to build institutional and human resource capacity to create a strong foundation for delivering high-quality, inclusive health services.



Based on the World Health Organization's building blocks for robust health systems – health service delivery, health workforce, health information systems, access to essential medicines, health systems financing, and leadership and governance – our comprehensive, integrated, multi-faceted approach to HRH / HSS has enabled AIHA to achieve sustainable outcomes over the past three decades through more than 300 partnerships and projects in over 40 countries across Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. We have trained hundreds of thousands of health workers and strengthened the capacity of hundreds of organizations, from hospitals and government public health institutions to civil society organizations and professional associations.

As COVID and other disease outbreaks have highlighted, the best way to improve global health security and prepare for pandemics is to have strong, resilient, and adaptive health systems with a skilled health workforce, something AIHA has been supporting for 30 years.

Our success in building local capacity over the years has grown and shifted focus based on ever-changing realities. This has included incorporating more south-to-south partnerships in which local institutions take the lead in addressing their HSS / HRH challenges, with AIHA's role being more strategic and advisory in nature. This approach is empowering, cost-effective, and makes the best use of limited resources.

The concept of twinning has been around for a long time, though the terminology is relatively new. In its broadest sense, twinning refers to a partnership that links two entities with shared characteristics to achieve a common goal. At AIHA:

- **Twinning** is a development model that uses institution-to-institution partnerships and peer relationships to benefit both sides.
- **Twinning** emphasizes professional exchanges and mentoring for the effective sharing of information, knowledge, and technology.
- **Twinning** taps into voluntary contributions of knowledge, time, expertise, and – in many cases – equipment, reference material, and other contributions to effectively leverage resources.
- **Twinning** helps develop inherently sustainable health system capacity because it encourages local ownership and synergy with host country goals and strategies from day one.



"When I was CEO and Vice Provost of the St. Paul Hospital Millennium Medical College, I experienced first-hand the value of an AIHA-led twinning partnership that strengthened our pre- and in-service training capacity in the field of obstetrics and gynecology. As Minister of Health, I continue to see the invaluable contribution AIHA has made over the past decade to improve the capacity of our country's institutions, resulting in better health outcomes."

- Dr. Lia Tedesse Gebremedhin, Minister of Health, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

At its core, the concept of twinning is about building sustainable, impactful and cost-effective partnerships among similar institutions with similar mandates. Generally, one partner has a significant amount of experience and expertise in a target area – HIV care and treatment or maternal and child health, for example – and the other partner is looking to strengthen their own capacity in that discipline. Most AIHA programs are based on twinning and the peer-to-peer relationships among healthcare providers, institutions, and policymakers who collaborate to find solutions to health services delivery issues that are technologically and economically sustainable in the host country. It's important to stress that partners on both sides learn from each other. Whether it's a new technology or standard of care or a cost-saving approach to care management or facility operations, partners benefit from their involvement in an AIHA-led twinning partnership, often building professional relationships that far outlast the project funding period.

ABOUT AIHA

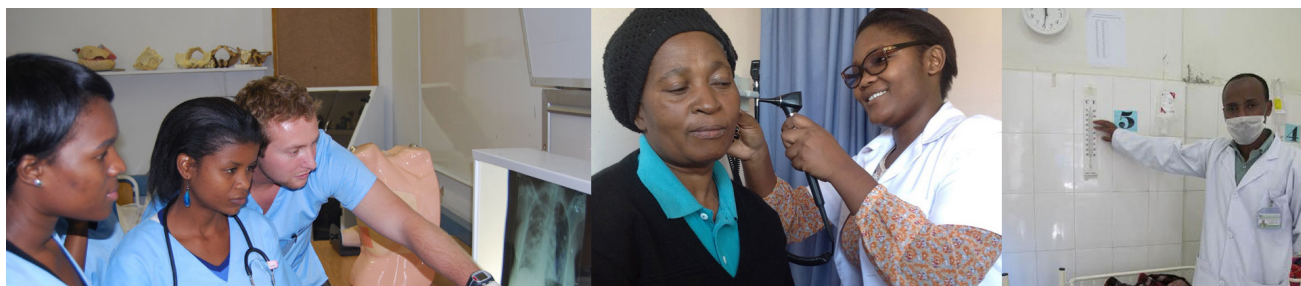


Our Beneficiaries are ultimately the individuals who have access to the care and services they need to improve their health and well-being as a result of the work that we do.

AIHA's Clients and Customers encompass a broad array of public health and international development stakeholders, including donor and technical aid agencies, host country governments, and other partner organizations. Ministries of health in LMICs are often key clients for HSS projects while healthcare professionals, community health workers, and civil society organizations are our primary partners for workforce development projects.

Our Geographic Footprint. Since 1992, AIHA has implemented projects in 43 countries spanning the globe. We implement projects where our interventions respond to a need consistent with our mission, with particular focus on the most resource-constrained countries and communities, and on disenfranchised populations where health inequities and disparities are the most prominent. A secondary geographic focus is emerging markets. While AIHA is open to working in any region or country, including the United States, the determination of where we work is often guided by changes in the external environment, including donor priorities, transitioning situations in host countries, and evolving health trends.

Our Aspiration is to be an organization of choice for global HSS / HRH capacity building.



As an organization, AIHA is flexible, nimble, and client-oriented – a trusted partner able to deliver results on time and on budget while providing value on investment that is transparent, ethical, accountable, responsive, and results-oriented.



PROBLEM STATEMENT

Against a backdrop of emerging threats like COVID-19 coupled with longstanding public health challenges such as HIV/AIDS, TB, and other infectious diseases; – noncommunicable diseases; and maternal and child healthcare – health disparities and inequities are only becoming more pronounced. The organizational and institutional capacity to address critical public health needs is not keeping pace. The shortage of a well-trained health workforce impedes the functioning of health systems and hinders positive health outcomes, which leads to a downward cycle of ill health, decreased educational achievement, and increased poverty.

In September 2019, the United Nations adopted a resolution on Universal Health Coverage (UHC), calling for countries to “take immediate steps toward addressing the global shortfall of 18 million health workers” and for the “creation of 40 million health worker jobs by 2030” by scaling up and improving training, skills enhancement, education, recruitment, retention, and deployment, among other interventions. Again, the COVID-19 pandemic has tragically underscored the need for all countries to develop and support a well-resourced, well-trained health workforce.

Addressing health workforce shortages is only one component of strengthening health systems. A broader challenge is to increase access to quality healthcare services in a world fraught with disparities, where one-half of the world’s population is without access to essential health services. Ultimately, improving health outcomes is a key contributor for growth, development, and the alleviation of poverty as outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



STRATEGY

Setting the Stage. AIHA's goal is to be a solutions provider for HSS / HRH challenges consistent with our stated mission. To this end, we will proactively seek out both solicited and unsolicited opportunities in a manner that optimizes chances for obtaining support. AIHA recognizes we are likely to have a better chance of obtaining funding in countries where we have previously and more recently implemented activities or in technical areas where we have a demonstrated track record. Winning new business requires us to excel in our existing business and, therefore, AIHA is committed to the highest level of programmatic and operational excellence possible.

Whether it is our country-based interventions, contract compliance, or sound financial stewardship of donor funds, AIHA strives to ensure the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of all our operations. We closely monitor donor funding trends and shifts in global health priorities, matching them against our core competencies and comparative advantages. We seek opportunities for strategic partnering with a broad range of stakeholders, including, increasingly, non-governmental and civil society organizations based in LMICs. Whenever possible, AIHA will draw from our peer-to-peer institutional twinning model.

AIHA's Model. In 1992, AIHA pioneered an exciting and innovative model of "development through diplomacy" by establishing a series of partnerships that linked U.S. hospitals and health systems with counterpart institutions in the former Soviet Union. That model and AIHA's projects have now reached 43 countries across four continents.

AIHA'S TWINNING MODEL IS CHARACTERIZED BY:

- Peer-to-peer relationships built through institutional partnerships
- Non-prescriptive but rigorous approach to process
- Demand-driven with recipient investment and ownership
- Knowledge management: sharing and transfer of lessons learned and best practices
- Emphasis on professional exchanges and mentoring
- Voluntary contributions and leveraging of resources
- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of our programs and impact

AIHA's twinning model presumes that healthcare professionals abroad are more receptive to new ideas and more willing to make changes when they work together with colleagues who face the same challenges in their day-to-day practice. Consequently, we engage health and allied professionals, governments, and community leaders to introduce new models of care, train and mentor healthcare providers, and strengthen professional healthcare associations and regulatory bodies. Twinning is unique in that it is truly a two-way transfer of knowledge with both sides learning from each other, as well as from similar types of partnerships sharing successful outcomes and lessons learned.



AIHA plays a critical role in establishing successful twinning partnerships. We identify both technical and organizational capacity gaps and deploy our own staff or external experts who will review and assess the situation, work with partners to build institutional capacity, and train and mentor staff to ensure successful, locally sustainable development.

Additionally, AIHA works to convene groups of similar partnerships to share best practices and lessons learned, which helps streamline projects and eliminate duplication of effort. And drawing on three decades of experience forging strong working relations with ministries of health and healthcare communities in LMICs around the globe – we serve as a bridge linking our technical partners and experts and facilitating their collaboration with local policymakers and the greater healthcare community. From universities and schools of health and allied professions to hospitals, clinics, and community-based service organizations we understand the stakeholders and the context in which they operate.

"The nature of the twinning model ... working so closely with our exact Counterparts over several years and developing these long-term professional and personal relationships is something that is just not possible with any other form of technical assistance."

- Dr. Joseph Masci, Director, Global Health Institute, NYC Health + Hospitals / Elmhurst Hospital, New York

In addition to our twinning model, AIHA uses a range of highly participatory and collaborative technical approaches, including consultancies, mentorship, direct service provision, and a hybrid approach that draws elements from a variety of modalities to achieve the targeted outcomes in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, depending on project priorities and other considerations. Even before the pandemic, we increasingly incorporated long-distance training, remote, and online learning into our technical assistance projects. We accelerated these efforts greatly because of COVID-19 and have found it to be cost-effective and highly responsive to locally defined needs and gaps. Whatever model we use, AIHA focuses on implementing capacity building interventions, forging sustainable partnerships, and developing long-lasting solutions that lead to measurably improved health outcomes.

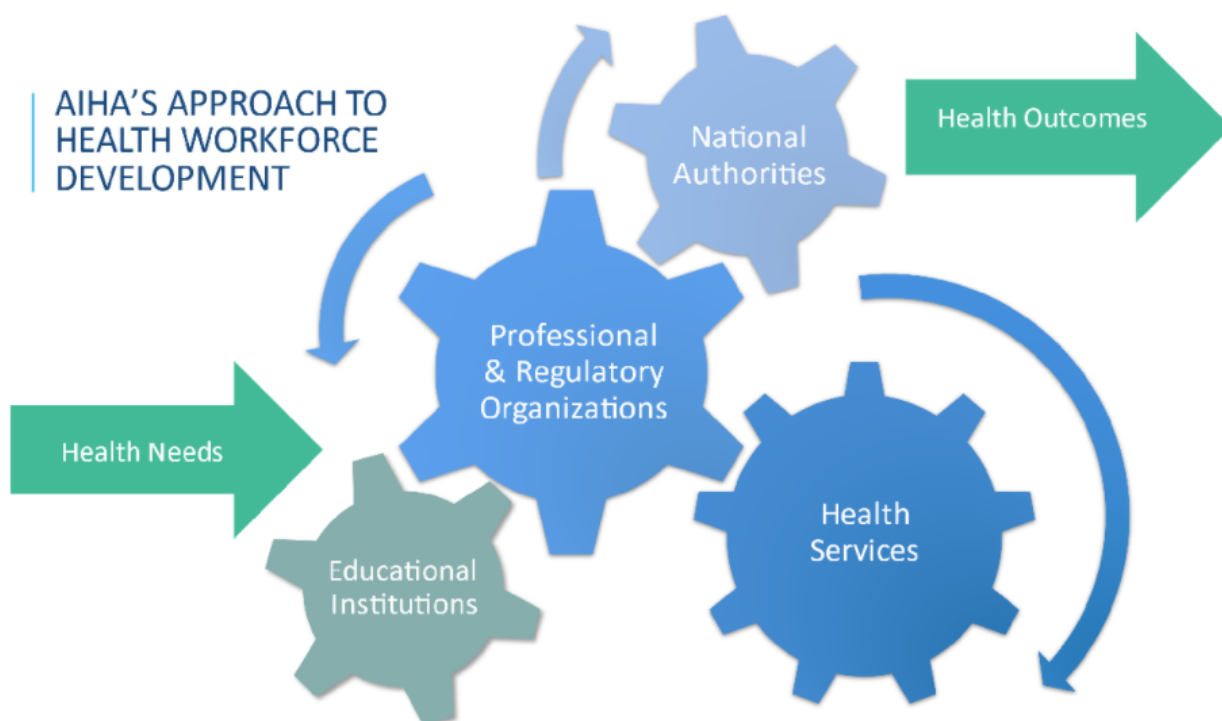
"I have benefitted greatly not only from the training, but also the one-on-one mentoring provided at AIHA-supported Nursing Leadership Development workshops conducted by U.S. experts through the Tanzania Nursing Initiative."

- Stephen Kibusi, Head of Nursing Management, Muhimbili University



Our Approach. AIHA operates under a holistic view of health workforce capacity building as part of the overall HSS ecosystem. As defined by the World Health Organization, this ecosystem includes health service delivery, health workforce, health information systems, access to essential medicines, health systems financing, and leadership and governance.

Because so much of AIHA's work is – and will continue to be – focused on building local capacity, we identify key challenges and priority areas in each country where we work collaboratively with the respective ministries of health, donors, partners, and beneficiaries. In one country, AIHA might provide technical assistance to help a local organization obtain ISO accreditation for a laboratory calibration center. In another, we might implement a comprehensive program to help girls stay in school and avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. And in another country, we might help an organization serving key populations to improve its financial, administrative, and project management capacity so they can qualify to receive donor funding for future programming.



AIHA will increase our efforts in offering a package of services and expertise to local organizations who take the lead on designing and implementing development efforts. This includes providing strategic counsel and developing skills that enable local organizations to competitively bid on donor-supported health and development projects; offering training and mentorship to help CSO/NGOs manage and scale up such projects; supporting communities of practice and innovative ways to share knowledge and lessons learned; and assisting local organizations in developing social enterprise and other initiatives to strengthen their organization financial sustainability.

AIHA draws on technical capacity where it exists to assemble the most effective project team. For much of our history, this meant North-South partnerships. After decades of capacity building, however, many health institutions and allied care organizations have amassed significant technical expertise of their own and are eager to provide support through South-South projects and locally led initiatives, particularly those managed by affected populations and organizations. As always, AIHA will provide a broad range of technical and logistical expertise and support to each partnership and project, including organizational development support in management, finance, administration, human resources, communications, and reporting. AIHA also facilitates robust communication and collaboration among our partners and projects as an effective forum for knowledge transfer and sharing of best practices and lessons learned.

AIHA HAS SIGNIFICANT CAPACITY IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS ADDRESSING DISEASES AND PUBLIC HEALTH INTERVENTIONS, INCLUDING:

- **Infectious Diseases, including HIV/AIDS**
- **Community-based Primary Healthcare**
- **Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health**
- **Emergency Medicine**
- **Noncommunicable Diseases**
- **Infection Control and Patient Safety**
- **Pandemic Preparedness and Response**
- **Blood Safety**



Our Interventions. Based on our model, approach, and past performance, over the next 3-5 years, AIHA will pursue funding for projects that:

- 1) Build health workforce capacity among a broad range of **medical and allied cadres**;
- 2) Strengthen **institutions and organizations** ranging from universities and hospitals to government led public health institutions; from community-based health centers to NGOs, FBOs, and CSOs;
- 3) Develop and implement **technical interventions and tools** to effectively address the most pressing public health challenges.

AIHA HAS PARTNERED WITH AND BUILT CAPACITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED PROFESSIONALS

- Medical Doctors (including general practitioners, emergency medicine specialists, OB/GYNs, trauma specialists, infectious disease specialists, pediatricians, surgeons, etc.)
- Nurses
- Counselors (healthcare, peer, etc.)
- Community Health Workers
- Clinical Associates (Physician Assistants)
- Pharmacists and Pharmaceutical Technicians
- Medical Technologists
- Laboratory Technicians
- Biomedical Engineers and Technicians
- Social Workers and Social Welfare professionals

AIHA HAS PARTNERED WITH AND BUILT CAPACITY OF VARIOUS TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS

- Hospitals, clinics, laboratories, and other health-related institutions
- Universities, colleges, and schools of health professions
- Host country governments, regulatory authorities, and policymakers
- Professional associations
- Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)
- Faith-based organizations (FBOs)
- Civil society organizations (CSOs), including groups of and for key populations that target marginalized, disenfranchised, and most vulnerable individuals
- Frontline healthcare workers and related organizations
- Community health workers and related organizations

AIHA HAS DEPLOYED MANY TECHNICAL INTERVENTIONS AND TOOLS

- Disease-specific or broader public health technical approaches
- Leadership, management, and organizational development
- Association building
- Knowledge management and evidence-based practices
- Distance learning and telehealth
- Training (training of trainers, pre- and in-service training, mentorship, supportive supervision)
- Curriculum development
- Faculty development
- Professional exchanges
- Distance learning, eHealth platforms, and telemedicine
- Accreditation and standardization
- Assessment, monitoring, and evaluation
- Operations research

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Based on global funding and technical trends matched with AIHA's competencies and likely opportunities, over the next 3 years, AIHA will work to further build, deepen, and expand our collaborations with our existing funders as well as seek support from new donors. This includes the U.S. Government (USAID, CDC, and others), other bilateral aid agencies, multilateral agencies, private sector corporations, foundations, individuals, and other sources. While there continues to be a clear need for ongoing efforts to bolster health systems, strengthen the health workforce, build local capacity, and deliver health services in the developing world, we plan to explore opportunities to leverage AIHA's core competencies in new fields that could eventually expand our mission. This could include expanding our work in other areas to improve health, such as direct service delivery, health promotion and disease prevention, health governance and leadership, and health system financing. It could also encompass working on health issues in marginalized communities in the United States or applying our traditional partnership and local capacity building models to related fields, such as education, nutrition, or agriculture.

We will increase our outreach to international development organizations and contractors (and increasingly those based in the developing world) to subcontract with them on proposal bids while we work to increase our funding base and human resources to better support our ability to prime bids, particularly those issued by the U.S. Government. Similar to how we collaborate with local partners in program management to deliver results through twinning and other participatory forms of partnership, we will increasingly engage local experts and organizations to identify and respond to business/donor funding opportunities that support local efforts to strengthen health systems and achieve improved health outcomes. We will build on existing relationships with select hospitals and academic institutions to collaborate on joint projects and proposal development. We will also ramp up efforts to effectively communicate the successes of AIHA's projects, our added value, our unique selling proposition, and our impact.





MEASURING AIHA'S SUCCESS

Measuring AIHA's success will come in many forms. At the **project** level, it will include achieving workplan deliverables on time and within budget. Deliverables will be measured at the activity, output, and to some extent at the outcome and impact levels. It will also be measured by client satisfaction with AIHA, from partners to donors. Key areas for measurement include demonstrable improvements in health services provided, increased capacity of organizations, and the sustainability of interventions, projects, and organizations. AIHA will strengthen our own Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework to ensure it is state of the art, incorporating trends and innovations in public health, an example of which would be putting more emphasis on and rigor toward measuring health equity.

At the **organizational** level, AIHA will measure success against achievement of our mission and our annual organization objectives spanning our work across all functions, including business development, communications, finance, operations and administration, programs, cross-functional, and Board relations.

PARTNER WITH AIHA

Since 1992, AIHA has been awarded more than \$370 million in U.S. Government grants, which we have leveraged by an additional \$300 million in in-kind contributions of professional time and material resources from our partners at more than 300 U.S. hospitals, health systems, and academic institutions.

“AIHA has a long history of working with a broad range of stakeholders in LMICs to strengthen local health system capacity and train health workers to provide quality, equitable healthcare services. They work hand-in-hand with their partners – from the Ministry of Health down to grassroots community-level organizations – to develop sustainable solutions across a wide array of health concerns and healthcare disciplines.”

– Dr. Muhammed Ali Pate, Julio Frenk Professor of the Practice of Public Health Leadership at the Harvard University TC Chan School of Public Health; former Global Director for Health, Nutrition and Population and Director and Director of the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents,

Because AIHA’s twinning model is inherently flexible and dynamic, we’ve been able to successfully apply it to a broad range of public health challenges and disciplines in LMICs around the globe.

We’re here to work with you to help achieve health equity.

