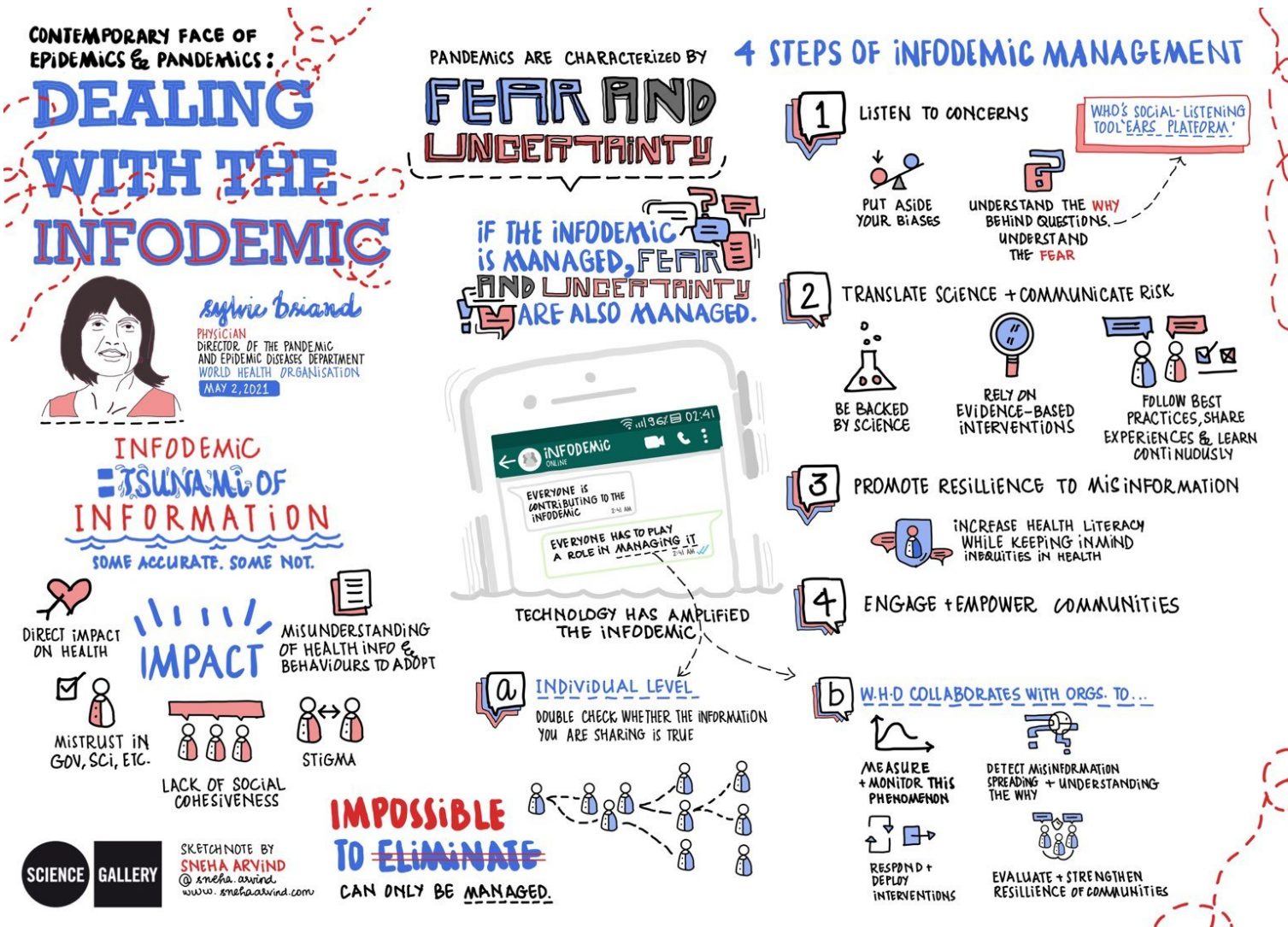


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# Infodemic Management News Flash

Thursday 24 June 2021 | Issue #16

# Feature Artwork

We all learn differently. Some of us are visual learners, some people do best listening to new information, some learn by reading and writing, while others need more hands-on activities to cement new ideas.

This sketchnote, by [Sneha Arvind](#), is a great visual roadmap of a recent [CONTAGION public lecture](#) by WHO's Director of Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness Department, Dr Sylvie Briand. The lecture discussed the four steps of infodemic management, as well as tools and techniques to support each step. Visual representations of data, such as sketchnotes, graphics and cartoons can help people to process and remember new information. It can also help to synthesise complex information and break it into more manageable bites.

Understanding the different ways people learn and digest information is important for thinking about how we communicate in the infodemic. We need to use all the tools in our toolbox to reach people. This may require us to think beyond what we've always done and try new ideas - even if that means breaking out the marker pens.

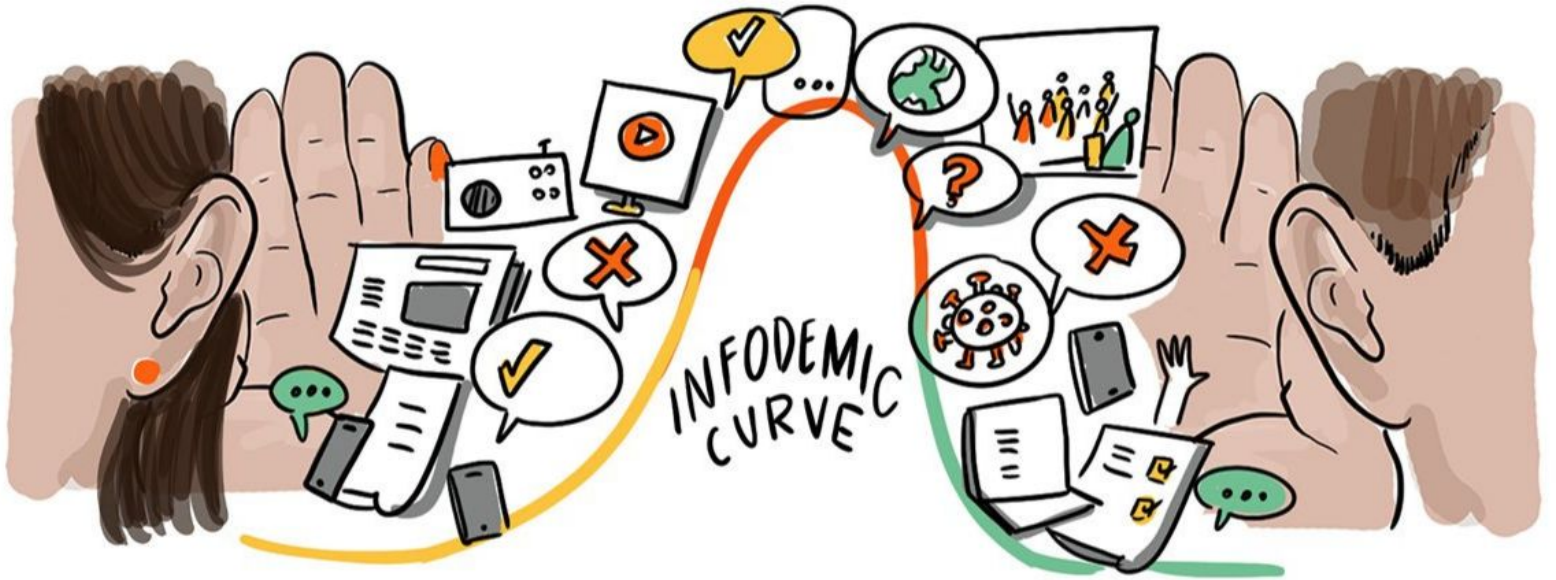
© [Sneha Arvind](#)

For more great communication ideas, make sure you check out the WHO global conference on communicating science during health emergencies [here](#) and 📌.

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# Feature Content

## Challenges and opportunities to advance social listening



# WHO 4th Infodemic Management Conference

Working with and listening to communities is a critical first step in informed public health decision-making. In May, experts and participants from around the world convened for the [4th Virtual WHO Infodemic Management Conference](#) to share knowledge, advances and challenges in social listening for public health. The conference ran over three days with three key focus areas:

- FOCUS 1: Case studies applying social listening for public health
- FOCUS 2: Tools and techniques for listening to communities to strengthen public health
- FOCUS 3: Key challenges and opportunities for advancing social listening for public health

Emerging from the diversity of expert presentations and perspectives, it's clear that social listening for public health has advanced significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. New tools and techniques have been developed and implemented at scale, and global collaborations have been strengthened. And yet there's much room to grow. The best available subscription services are not designed for public health, and promising approaches such as social network analysis are still out of reach for many teams. And despite many technological advances, there are still issues of social responsibility when it comes to the role of digital platforms, and the work of social listening needs to be advanced in the context of an ethics framework for accountability to affected populations. These social listening techniques also reveal a need for further guidance on how to move from infodemic insights to action, a

process that WHO's EPI-WIN team has developed using a risk analysis framework. There's also a need to develop new approaches for triangulating online and offline data sources, and evaluating interventions in real-time for more adaptive public health programmes.

**All of these issues and many more were covered, so if you missed the conference, check out these resources available online.**

See the [full program](#).

Learn more [about the speakers](#).

Watch [the videos](#) of all three days in English and French.

You can read some conference takeaways from conference moderator Tina Purnat below and watch for the WHO conference report!

[Day one reflections](#)

[Day two reflections](#)

[Day three reflections](#)

Image credit: [Sam Bradd](#)



**UN Global Pulse and WHO join forces to build a social listening radio tool to aid the COVID-19 infodemic response**



Radio remains one of the most reliable and affordable ways of accessing and sharing information with UNESCO reporting some 44,000 stations worldwide. People discuss everything from the light-hearted to the serious, including the effects COVID-19 is having on them, their families, and their communities. Often opinions expressed in radio talk shows include first-hand accounts of incidents and mis- and disinformation reported by citizens that may not be recorded elsewhere.

Recognizing this, WHO and UN Global Pulse have joined forces to analyse content shared on public radio across the African continent to support infodemic monitoring. Part of the wider [infodemic management programme](#), this collaboration will integrate radio data analysis into monitoring tools to inform the infodemic response by including more voices of vulnerable populations.

[Read more on this announcement here.](#)



**WHO launches a new global hub for pandemic and epidemic intelligence**

WHO's EPI-WIN team has been developing infodemic intelligence tools and weekly reports for COVID-19 since March of last year. As a next step for strengthening pandemic and infodemic preparedness and response, WHO with the support of the Federal Republic of Germany will establish a new global hub for pandemic and epidemic intelligence, data, surveillance and analytics innovation. The Hub, based in Berlin, is part of WHO's Health Emergencies Programme and will be a new collaboration of countries and partners worldwide, driving innovations to increase availability and linkage of diverse data, developing tools and predictive models for risk analysis, and monitoring

disease control measures, community acceptance and infodemics.

[Click here to learn more about the Hub.](#)

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## Opportunities for Action

# The Vaccine Confidence Fund

**Harnessing social media to increase vaccination confidence and uptake: *Alliance for Advancing Health Online's Vaccine Confidence Fund***

The *Alliance for Advancing Health Online* comprises members of the technology, health, global development, and academic sectors that have joined forces to advance public understanding of how social media can be utilized to better understand and increase the health and resiliency of communities around the world. The *Alliance* is launching a request for proposals (RFP) for research supported by the Vaccine Confidence Fund ("the Fund"). Facebook and Merck & Co., Inc. are financially sponsoring the Fund.

Other *Alliance* members will be serving on the Advisory Council.

An opportunity for all you infodemic managers working in support of COVID-19 immunization programmes.

The deadline for submission is August 6, 2021. [Full details are here.](#)



## **Social sciences and the COVID-19 pandemic - Call for conference papers**

The French Presidency of the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) of UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme is organising a symposium entitled "Social Sciences and the COVID-19 Pandemic: State of Knowledge and Proposals for Action". The symposium will be held 21 and 22 October 2021 and will cover the use of social science research in the management of the health crisis.

**Call for contributions closes 15th July.** [Find full details here.](#)



## **Submit your project for the Investigation Support Scheme grants**

IJ4EU's Investigation Support Scheme provides grants of between €5,000 and €50,000 to cross-border investigative projects. The proposed project must aim to reveal new information. Projects on all topics will be considered. This includes, but is not limited to, corruption, illicit enrichment and financial crime; security, democracy and human rights; environment and climate change; health, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. See a past infodemic project [here](#).

This scheme expects to provide €835,000 in grants in 2021. It is managed by

the [International Press Institute](#) (IPI).

Deadline for submissions is 14 July 2021. [Find full details here.](#)

There is a separate scheme for freelancers you can [access here.](#)



**Submit your fact-checking reports for the African Fact-Checking Awards**

Africa Check announced the continuation of its eighth-annual African Fact-Checking Awards, the longest-running awards programme that honors fact-checking journalism by the media in Africa.

The purpose of the awards are to promote the practice of fact-checking and make accurate information available to citizens of all countries across Africa, which is now more important than ever. Entries should identify a misleading or false claim on an important topic that originated in or is relevant to Africa.

Categories open for this call are for Fact-Check of the Year by a Working Journalist and Fact-Check of the Year by a Student Journalist.

Deadline for submissions is 1 August 2021. [Click here to learn more details and submit your report.](#)

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# Job Opportunities



- **WHO:** Consultants - [Building a public health intelligence taxonomy and ontology](#) (Remote)
- **WHO Academy:** [Establishment of a Roster of Experts to Advise the WHO Academy](#)
- **WHO:** [Communications and Social Media Officer](#) (Denmark-Copenhagen)
- **Kantar Public:** [Director - Social & Behavior Change](#) (Washington DC)
- **NATO StratCom COE:** [Communications Officer](#)
- **Expertise France:** [Expert in digitization of Public Health services Technical Support for Public Health Reform](#)
- **Transform Health:** [Consultancy to develop case studies on the role of digital health in achieving UHC](#)

## Upcoming Events



**25 June 2021**

### WHO global conference on communicating science during health emergencies

Join the World Health Organization Information Network for Epidemics (WHO EPI-WIN) for the public closing session of the global conference on communicating science during health emergencies. The session will feature 5 innovative keynote presentations illustrating how the science behind the COVID-19 pandemic can be made relevant and accessible to all. A panel

discussion will report back on the insights of the expert discussions held over the past three weeks with researchers, media representatives, decision-makers and professionals working in health, education and culture.

The audience will have the opportunity to submit questions to the keynote speakers and experts.

## **REGISTRATION DETAILS:**

Closing webinar: 25 June, 2021 13:00 CEST

Find out more about the [conference](#)

[Register](#) for the closing webinar



**[30 June 2021](#)**

### **Building best in class chatbots during COVID-19**

The World Health Organization is inviting you to the webinar “Building best in class chatbots during COVID-19”. WHO, governments, NGOs, academia and the private sector, will come together to discuss and share lessons learned during the pandemic.

Chatbots are software programmes that interact with people over voice or text. Even before COVID-19, they played an important role in healthcare and the use of AI-enabled solutions is expected to increase even more in the coming years. During the pandemic, with even some of the most resilient health systems overwhelmed, people have turned towards alternatives when it comes to

information and advice for their health. For many, their mobile phone is the primary source of information and chatbots are in the spotlight now more than ever.

The panels will discuss what’s new in the sector, how to fight the infodemic through language, usability and accessibility of chatbots and will share the biggest challenges and lessons learned over the past year. WHO will share a series of recent research papers with all participants.

**Registration details**



**Promoting Digital Health Literacy in an Era of New Media and Misinformation**

**Public Health Summer Institute 2021**

**June 24 & 25, 2021    ONLINE**

**8:45am - 2:00pm PDT**



**24 & 25 June 2021**

**Fake or Fact? Promoting Digital Health Literacy in an Era of New Media and Misinformation**

The Public Health Association of BC, Saskatchewan Public Health Association, Yukon Public Health Community of Practice, and the Public Health Agency of Canada are proud to announce their 12th annual public health summer institute, “*Fake or Fact? Promoting Digital Health Literacy in an Era of New Media and Misinformation,*” happening Thursday June 24th and Friday June 25th, 2021.

The institute endeavours to bring together public health professionals and providers, students and researchers across numerous health and social service

sectors to explore the population health challenges and opportunities related to the dissemination, diffusion and promotion of health information in the digital age.

[Register to attend here.](#)



**[30 June 2021](#)**

**Fact-checking COVID-19: joint unCoVer & PHIRI workshop**

unCoVer is a functional network of partners capable of harvesting real-world data derived from the response and provision of care to patients by the health systems across Europe, and internationally during the COVID-19 pandemic. The network [aims](#) include synchronising research efforts, identifying data gaps and streamlining processes in addressing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Join them on June 30 for a joint unCoVer/PHIRI Fact-checking COVID-19 presentation.



[Register for the workshop here.](#)



**[28 & 29 June 2021](#)**

## **Human rights communicators explore how to tackle disinformation**

The Human Rights Communicators Network is an online group of experts in communication working on human rights. Over two days, human rights communicators will gather for their annual network meeting to share know-how and expertise. This year, the focus will be on tackling disinformation.

On 28 June, there will be an online public event with a mix of presentations and interactive Q&As from:

- Anat Shenker-Osorio (Host, Words to Win by podcast)
- Peter Pomerantsev (Author, This is not Propaganda)
- Chloe Colliver (Head of Digital Policy, Institute of Strategic Dialogue)
- Gabrielle Guillemain (Senior Policy Officer, Article 19. org)

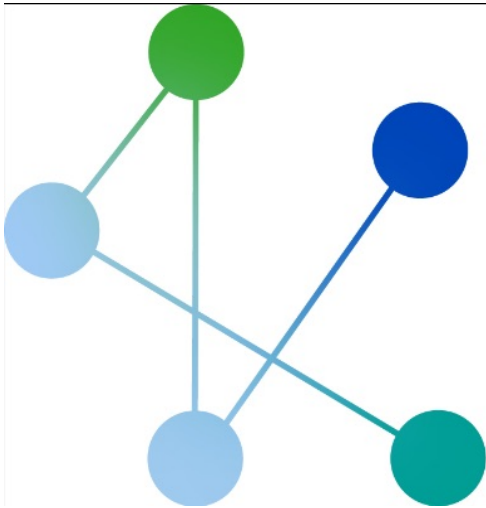
Practical workshops for network members will follow on 29 June.

[Register for the public event here.](#)

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## Recent Events

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# PHIRI

Population Health Information  
Research Infrastructure

9 & 16 June 2021

### PHIRI Infodemic management online workshop

The Population Health Information Research Infrastructure for COVID-19 (PHIRI) recently convened a workshop aiming to gather and present experiences, lessons learned and good practices on infodemic management during the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe.

The workshop was opened by Dr Christine Czerniak from the World Health Organization on 9 June and by Tina Purnat of ECDC on 16 June and included two days of presentations, including experts who participated in the [1st Global Infodemic Manager Training](#).

You can [read more](#) about the workshop.



## 20 May - 10 June 2021

### **COVID-19 vaccine communications webinar series: Co-convened by the World Health Organization, UNICEF and Religions for Peace**

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the loss of too many lives and immeasurable suffering around the world. As the global community battles to control the pandemic, it is clear that equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines must remain a priority. Faith actors continue to play a critical role in advocating for fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. WHO, UNICEF and Religions for Peace were pleased to facilitate a recent panel discussion where representatives shared and discussed the role and impact of faith actors in championing vaccine equity and access.

Recordings are now available for the webinars

Session One [information](#) and [recording](#).

Session Two [information](#) and [recording](#).



## 17 May 2021

### **European Public Health Week webinar: Infodemic management: From listening to public health action**

Watch this webinar to hear WHO's Dr Christine Czerniak, Melinda Frost and Sarah Hess introduce the concept of infodemic management and social



listening - why it is important, how it is done and how it informs the COVID-19 response as well as the role played by trusted influencers in the pandemic response.

[Watch the recording here.](#)



**6 May 2021**

Listen to the keynote of Her Excellency, Prime Minister of Estonia, Ms Kaja Kallas sharing her reflections on the effect of the infodemic on Estonians, including that the crisis has magnified existing problems, for example, vaccine hesitancy and the need to empower people and promote resilience to reinforce trust. She also shares some key initiatives from Estonia that have helped to engage a whole-of-society approach to managing the infodemic.

[Watch the recording here.](#)



**30 April 2021**

**World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2021**



In June 2020, more than 130 United Nations member countries and official observers called on all States to take steps to counter the spread of disinformation, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This WSIS session hosted by UNESCO addressed challenges facing some of these key actors in mitigating the 'disinfodemic' and perspectives on how stakeholder responses can sustain freedom of expression and reinforce trust in science and facts. Dr Sylvie Briand, Director of the Global Infectious Hazards Management Department at WHO joined a panel for the session on "Countering digital disinformation while respecting freedom of expression" where she defined the infodemic, its source and impact, and highlighted the essential role that trust plays in responding to epidemics and pandemics.

[Watch this webinar recording here.](#)

## What We're Reading



[Stewardship of global collective behavior](#)

17 May 2021



[Communication vs evidence: What hinders the outreach of science during an infodemic? A narrative review](#)

17 May 2021



[Interview with Dr Sylvie Briand: Infodemic and vaccines](#) [p 5 - 7]

9 May 2021



[Countering misinformation: A multidisciplinary approach](#)

5 May 2021

[In Science We Trust: The Effects of Information Sources on COVID-19 Risk Perceptions](#)

3 May 2021

[It doesn't take a village to fall for misinformation: Social media use, discussion heterogeneity preference, worry of the virus, faith in scientists, and COVID-19-related misinformation beliefs](#)

May 2021

[Investigating the Scientific 'Infodemic' Phenomenon Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

21 April 2021

[Cross-SEAN: A cross-stitch semi-supervised neural attention model for COVID-19 fake news detection](#)

15 April 2021

[From Theory to Practice I Understanding misinformation infodemic during public health emergencies due to large-scale disease outbreaks: a rapid review](#)

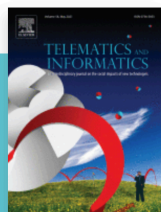
14 April 2021

[Misinformation and public opinion of science and health: Approaches,](#)

 Taylor & Francis Online



ScienceDirect



Telematics and Informatics

Supports open access



ScienceDirect



Applied Soft Computing

Supports open access



Journal of Public Health

From Theory to Practice



## Fun with Numbers

254

That's the number of new trainees who were selected for the **2nd** Global Infodemic Management training programme. The team received more than **700** applications from **114** countries. This time the training is being run in **2** languages, with **198** participants in the English cohort, and **56** in the French. **20%** are WHO staff, with **80%** coming from a range of other sectors and partners. The training wraps up this week and we will welcome **254** newly trained infodemic managers into our global community of practice!

[Click here to read more about the training.](#)

## About the News Flash

An infodemic is an overabundance of information—some accurate, some not—that spreads alongside a disease outbreak. Infodemics are nothing new, but in the digital age, they spread in real time and create a breeding ground for uncertainty. Uncertainty fuels skepticism and distrust, which is perfect environment for fear, anxiety, finger-pointing, stigma, violent aggression and dismissal of proven public health measures. To manage an infodemic, we need to understand what contributes to it. So that's why we're sending you these updates. In each issue of the WHO's Infodemic Management News Flash we'll share the latest work happening at the global level, as well as highlight some of the challenges and solutions with infodemics in local contexts. We'll also provide you with a few

takeaways to help you be an effective infodemic manager in your daily life.

If you have a tip on infodemic management or an idea for a future News Flash, email us at [infodemicmanagement@who.int](mailto:infodemicmanagement@who.int). Thanks for joining us on this journey.



**Our mailing address is: [infodemicmanagement@who.int](mailto:infodemicmanagement@who.int)**

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