



Stakeholders' and members' meeting

27-29 November 2023

WHO Headquarters

Meeting Report

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Background

Launched in 2019, the World Hearing Forum is a global network of stakeholders promoting ear and hearing care worldwide. Members of this advocacy network will commit to facilitating implementation of World Health Assembly resolution [WHA70.13 on “Prevention of deafness and hearing loss”](#) and the [World report on hearing](#).

Purpose of the forum:

The World Hearing Forum is filling a critical gap by bringing a collective vision to advocacy and collaboration in this field. Through networking and by sharing knowledge, skills and experiences from the field, the World Hearing Forum is galvanizing action towards a world in which no person experiences hearing loss due to preventable causes and those with hearing loss can achieve their full potential through early identification and appropriate management of their condition.

Activities of the forum:

The forum’s activities currently focus on the following workstreams:

1. Changemakers
2. External relations
3. Make listening safe
4. Member engagement
5. World hearing day



World Hearing Forum stakeholders' meeting: recap

27 November 2023

The World Hearing forum opened with opening remarks from WHO's Assistant Director General, Professor Jerome Salomon and was chaired by Dr Alarcos Cieza, Unit Head in the Department for Noncommunicable Diseases, Rehabilitation and Disability. This was followed by Shari Eberts who shared her own hearing loss journey and how it was shaped by societal



perceptions. Dr Shelly Chadha set the stage for the meeting by providing the context about the relevance of changing perceptions of hearing loss within the society and among health care providers.

“Changing mindsets is essential to making ear and hearing care a reality for all” – Dr Shelly Chadha

Following this, Imre Hollo moderated a panel on societal perceptions of hearing loss with a diverse group of panelists representing different sections of the society:

- Ms Ketevani Kalandze (Georgia Parents Group),
- Ms Charmaine Sylvan (Caribbean Visionary Educators, Trinidad Parent-Teachers Association),

- Ms Joyce Nalugya (Global Coalition of Parents of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing),
- Dr Premikha M (WHO Interns association),
- Mr Maurizio Arseni (Geneva Solutions), and
- Mr Brian Lamb (Hearing Loss and Deaf Alliance).

Each of these panelists offered their perspective on hearing loss and the associated societal stigma.

Subsequently, Dr Lauren Dillard and Dr Pallavi Mishra (WHO) presented their findings of a systematic scoping review on perceptions and stigma regarding hearing loss.



Following the lunch break, Dr Carolina Der gave an overview about WHO advocacy tools and initiatives and how they can be used to facilitate actions to change societal perceptions. This was followed by presentations on specific advocacy tools and initiatives including World Hearing Day (Dr James Saunders and Dr Arun Agarwal), 'Amplifying Changemakers' stories' (Dr Rachael Hapunda and Ms Audra Renyi), and the 'Make Listening Safe' initiative (Dr Amarilis Melendez and Dr Mark Laureyns).

Split up into groups, the participants then worked to explore key barriers and actions to change mindsets related to ear and hearing problems through the following questions:

1. What are the key barriers to addressing societal perceptions of hearing loss (and ear problems)?
2. Outline approaches/actions that can help us change mindsets related to ear and hearing care problems?





Group work outcomes

Several key barriers and actions were discussed across each of the groups.

Below noted is a compiled list of the responses to the two questions from the various groups:

Key barriers to addressing societal perceptions of hearing loss (and ear problems):

1. **Invisibility:** Hearing loss and ear problems are often invisible and underestimated due to diverse range of problems, posing challenges for effective advocacy.
2. **Stigma and misperceptions:** Stigma and ignorance surround hearing loss, fueled by cultural, religious, and social misconceptions.
3. **Lack of awareness:** Limited awareness among parents, the public, healthcare staff, and policymakers contributes to a lack of understanding.
4. **Systemic issues and negative perceptions:** Issues include insufficient coverage of hearing loss in medical curricula, negative connotations, a lack of representation in the media, aesthetic concerns with hearing aids, inadequate healthcare system investment, negative perceptions of audiologists, and a lack of self-acceptance among individuals with hearing loss.

Approaches/actions that can help us change mindsets related to ear and hearing care problems:

- Promote Inclusive Environments: Advocate for accessible spaces and features.
- Empower Public Awareness: Educate the community about hearing loss prevention and management.
- Transform Educational Practices: Sensitize educators and integrate hearing health education into curricula.
- Foster Collaborative Advocacy: Partner with stakeholders to advance early hearing care practices and policies.
- Invest in Professional Training: Enhance the expertise of healthcare professionals in ear and hearing care.
- Guide Policy Development: Advocate for the adoption of global guidelines for hearing loss prevention and management.

Access group work slides [here!](#)



28 November 2023

On day 2, the meeting reopened with a presentation by Dr Shelly Chadha and Dr Carolina Der on integration of ear and hearing care across the life course and available WHO tools to support this. This was followed by a panel discussion on healthcare provider perceptions related to hearing care moderated by Dr Amelia Tuipulotu, Chief Nursing Officer, WHO. The panel of experts who shared their valuable perspectives included:

- Dr Elisabeth Mukendi (World Federation of Public Health Associations)
- Dr Karine Lavoie (International Council of Nurses)
- Dr Antonio Rizzoli-Cordoba (International Paediatric Association)
- Dr Leon Geffen (World Organization of Family Doctors)
- Mr Salman Khan (International Federation of Medical Students Associations)



Mr Glenn Van Biesen, policy officer at the Belgian National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance provided the perspective of policymakers during a fireside chat with Dr Gerard Schmets. They discussed the motivations for integrating hearing care into national health policy, barriers and possible ways to address these.



To energize participants during the intense discussions, Dr Alarcos Cieza led the participants in doing the traditional 'COCONUT'. This activity involves standing up and spelling out the word 'coconut' with your arms. It's a great way to get your blood flowing and your energy level up!

During the afternoon session the participants were split up into groups to discuss ways for broadening the reach of the World Hearing Forum by considering two questions:



1. Which stakeholder groups, outside of EHC (professional and civil society groups), should we reach out to?
2. How can we motivate them to become ambassadors for integration of EHC?

Group work outcomes

Several stakeholder groups to reach out to were identified by the groups. In addition, they came up with various actions to be taken to motivate them to become ambassadors for integration of EHC.

Below, a summarized list of these can be found followed by a more comprehensive list.

Stakeholder groups, outside of EHC (professional and civil society groups), to reach out to:

- Healthcare workers: mental health professionals, pediatricians, geriatricians, nurses, general physicians, social workers, speech-language pathologists, pharmacists
- Government: Ministry of health, ministry of higher education, etc.
- Academic/Educational: Universities, parent and teacher associations, school boards, youth groups
- Industry: Toy manufacturers, film and music producers, video game developers
- Humanitarian: Rights-based organizations, foundations and funding groups
- Media: Social media influencers, media outlets, celebrities
- Advocacy: Public health organizations, local government workers, community organizations, patient advocacy groups, associations for the elderly

How to motivate stakeholder groups, outside of EHC (professional and civil society groups) to become ambassadors for EHC:

- Disseminate Information: Engage with relevant hearing care and non-hearing care stakeholders, including other health professionals, schools, and parent groups.
- Amplify Stories of Success: Collaborate with media, influencers, and stakeholders to share personal experiences and success stories of EHC.

- Develop Resources and Foster Engagement: Create relatable toolkits/packets for stakeholder groups and encourage participation in World Hearing Day activities.
- Promote Educational Initiatives: Advocate for universities to offer EHC education and support initiatives for hearing loss awareness among pupils, teachers, and parents.
- Leverage Youth and Disability Advocacy: Educate youth groups on hearing care inclusion and encourage disability organizations to advocate with policymakers.

Access group work slides [here](#)!

Following the discussion of the afternoon's group work, Ms Chitra Chander (WHO) gave a presentation on the theme and plans for World Hearing Day 2024.



World Hearing Forum members' meeting: 29 November 2023

The third day of the meeting was dedicated for members of the forum, which opened with some reflections from the members. Following this, each workstream's co-chairs had the opportunity to give a presentation on their group's activities and achievements over the past four years.

WHO thanked each of the outgoing Steering Committee members and presented them with a memento to demonstrate WHO's gratitude for the great work they did. This was marked as an official passing of the baton ceremony to the new steering committee.







The incoming Steering Committee was welcomed and presented with the traditional WHO scarves.



During the remainder of the morning, the two new cross-cutting workstreams were introduced. These new workstreams will focus on 'external relations' and 'member engagement'. These along with the existing 'World Hearing Day', 'Make listening safe', and 'Changemakers' will make up the five workstreams of the World Hearing Forum.



The afternoon session was dedicated to the convening of these five workstreams who met in smaller groups to discuss their workplans. These meetings provided an opportunity to the new co-chairs to formally introduce themselves to the workstream members and to begin working on each workstream's objectives. Following this, the groups returned to the main meeting room for a plenary discussion and a focus on the World Hearing Forum's next steps.





And with that, the World Hearing Forum stakeholders' and members meeting 2023 closed!

We thank everyone for their hard work and dedication to make this edition a success!

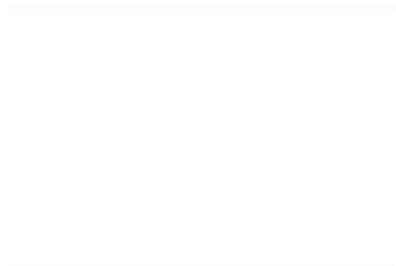




Click [here](#) for more World Hearing Forum photos!

Next steps

1. WHO to share meeting record.
2. World Hearing Day Products to be released on 1 February 2024.
3. Co-chairs of workstreams to arrange meetings with their group members to discuss work plans.
4. WHO to organize members update web meeting in May 2024 (TBC).
5. Member applications for wider stakeholders to open by 15 January 2024 (TBC).



Annex 1 – Meeting agenda

World Hearing Forum stakeholders' meeting, 27-28 November 2023

Objectives:

1. Discuss the importance of, barriers to, and strategies for changing people's perceptions related to hearing loss;
2. Update stakeholders on the work and initiatives of the WHO Programme for ear and hearing care; and
3. Identify opportunities for integration of EHC into public health initiatives across the life course, including primary health care.

Agenda:

Chairperson: Dr Alarcos Cieza, Unit Head,
Sensory Functions, Disability and Rehabilitation

27 November 2023, Time (CET)		
08:00-08:45	Registration and nameplates distribution	
09:10-09:50	Welcome and opening Personal story Ear and hearing care for all: changing perceptions	Prof Jerome Salomon, ADG HQ/UCN Shari Eberts Shelly Chadha, WHO
09:50-10:20	Networking Coffee break	
10:20-10:50	Introductions	
10:50-10:55	Video	
10:55-11:30	Panel on 'societal perceptions of hearing loss' Panelists: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ketevani Kalandadze (Georgia Parents Group) 2. Charmaine Sylvan (Caribbean Visionary Educators, Trinidad Parent-Teachers association) 3. Joyce Nalugya (Global Coalition of Parents of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing) 4. Premikha M (WHO Interns association) 	Moderated by Imre Hollo, WHO
11:30-12:00	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Maurizio Arseni (Geneva Solutions) 6. Brian Lamb (Hearing Loss and Deaf Alliance) 	
	Discussion	

12:00-12:20	Understanding perceptions and stigma related to hearing loss: what we found	Lauren Dillard & Pallavi Mishra, WHO
12:20-13:30	<i>Lunch break</i>	
13:30-14:30	WHO advocacy tools and initiatives: overview	Carolina Der, WHO
	Using World Hearing Day to change societal perceptions: James Saunders, Arun Agarwal WHD purpose and impact	Audra Renyi, Rachael Hapunda
	Amplifying changemakers' stories to change societal perspectives - changemakers group purpose and impact	Mark Laureyns, Amarilis Melendez
	Making safe listening a reality WHO's work on MLS and its implementation through the WHF	
	Questions	
14:30-16:10	Introduction to and group work on changing societal perceptions of hearing loss	All participants
16:10-16:30	<i>Coffee break</i>	
16:30-17:30	Group work reporting and plenary discussion	All participants
17:45	<i>Group photo</i>	
18:00-19:30	<i>Reception</i>	

28 November 2023, Time (CET)		
09:00-09:10	Review and preview	
09:10-09:25	Integration of ear and hearing care into health care across the life course: why and how?	Shelly Chadha, WHO
09:25-10:05	<p>Panel on ‘healthcare provider perceptions related to hearing care’</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elisabeth Mukendi, World Federation of Public Health Associations, Congo 2. NS Karine Lavoie International Council of Nurses, Switzerland 3. Antonio Rizzoli-Cordoba, International Paediatric Association, Mexico 4. Leon Geffen, World Organization of Family Doctors, South Africa 5. Salman Khan, International Federation of Medical Students Associations, India 	Moderated by Dr Amelia Tuipulotu, CNO, WHO
10:05-10:25	Fireside chat with Glenn Van Biesen, Policy officer at the Belgian National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance, Belgium	Moderated by Dr Gerard Schmets, WHO
10:25-10:45	Discussion	
10:45-11:15	Coffee break	
11:15-12:45	Introduction to and group work on integration of hearing care across the life course	
12:45-13:45	Lunch break	
13:45-15:00	Group work reporting and plenary discussion	
15:00-15:30	Coffee break	
15:30-15:40	Theme and plan for WHD 2024	Chitra Chander, WHO
15:40-16:10	Brainstorm activities for WHD 2024	
16:10-16:15	Way forward and meeting close	

World Hearing Forum members' meeting 29 November 2023

Objectives:

1. Share WHO's vision for the future of the World Hearing Forum;
2. Review and revise the workplan of the Forum;
3. Renew the steering committee;
4. Outline strategies for expanding the reach of the forum to other health domains; and
5. Identify ways to strengthen engagement of forum members with its workplan.

Agenda:

Chairperson: Dr Alarcos Cieza, Unit Head,
Sensory Functions, Disability and Rehabilitation

29 November 2023, Time (CET)		
08:30-08:40	Welcome	
08:40-08:55	The past, the present and the future of the World Hearing Forum	Shelly Chadha, WHO
08:55-09:20	Reflections from members	All participants
09:20-09:55	Activities and achievements of workstreams:	
	1. Resolution and Report	Diego Santana, Isaac Macharia
	2. World Hearing Day	Arun Agarwal, James Saunders
	3. Make Listening Safe	Amarilis Melendez, Mark Laureyns
	4. Changemakers	Audra Renyi, Rachael Hapunda
	5. Resource Mobilization	Michael Chowen, George Tavartkiladze
09:55-10:15	Questions and discussions	
10:15-10:45	Photo and Coffee break	
10:45-11:15	Handing over the baton: introduction to new steering committee and thanking the first steering committee	
11:15-11:45	New cross-cutting workstreams	
	External relations	Peter Thorne, Ruth Warick
	Membership status and member engagement	Pallavi Mishra, Serwadda Moses, Sue Archbold
11:45-12:10	Questions and discussions	
12:10-12:15	Introduction to group work in workstreams	

12:15-13:15	<i>Lunch break</i>
13:15-15:45	Workstream meetings
15:45-16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
16:00-16:50	Plenary
16:50-17:00	Next steps and meeting closes

WHO Ear and Hearing Care Resources

World Report on Hearing



WORLD REPORT ON HEARING

This report presents epidemiological and financial data on hearing loss; outlines available cost-effective solutions and sets the way forward through 'Integrated people-centered ear and hearing care'

[English](#) | [Chinese](#) | [Italian](#) | [Spanish](#)



WORLD REPORT ON HEARING-EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[English](#) | [Arabic](#) | [Chinese](#) | [French](#) | [Russian](#) | [Spanish](#)



INTEGRATED PEOPLE-CENTRED EAR AND HEARING CARE: POLICY BRIEF

[English](#) | [Arabic](#) | [Chinese](#) | [French](#) | [Russian](#) | [Spanish](#)



WORLD REPORT ON HEARING GLOBAL INFOGRAPHIC

[English](#)



WORLD REPORT ON HEARING REGIONAL INFOGRAPHICS

[AFRO](#) | [EMRO](#) | [EURO](#) | [PAHO](#) | [SEARO](#) | [WPRO](#)



TEMPLATE FOR COUNTRY INFOGRAPHIC

[English](#)

Planning



SITUATION ANALYSIS TOOL

To assess the ear and hearing care situation and available resources in the country for integration into health systems: basis for national policy development

[English](#) | [Chinese](#) | [French](#) | [Russian](#) | [Spanish](#)



PLANNING & MONITORING OF NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Steps to conduct planning and monitoring

[English](#) | [Chinese](#) | [French](#) | [Russian](#) | [Spanish](#)



INDICATORS FOR MONITORING PROVISION OF SERVICES

Essential and core indicators for monitoring EHC services

[English](#) | [Spanish](#)

Training



PRIMARY EAR AND HEARING CARE TRAINING MANUAL

A practical guide on the prevention, identification, and management of hearing loss and common ear diseases that lead to hearing loss.

[English](#)



BASIC EAR AND HEARING CARE RESOURCE

An information/training resource for grassroots workers to facilitate guidance to community on: Early identification of hearing loss, dealing with ear discharge, good practices for prevention, communicating with PwHL

[English](#) | [French](#) | [Russian](#) | [Spanish](#)

Survey and screening



SURVEY HANDBOOK

Offers standardized methodology for population-based prevalence data and guidance on planning, conduct, analysis, and reporting

[English](#) | [Spanish](#)



HEARING SCREENING: CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATIONS

Provides guidance to facilitate programmatic planning through practical information on screening for hearing loss and related ear diseases in:

- Newborn babies and infants
- Preschool and school children
- Older people

[English](#) | [French](#) | [Marathi](#) | [Spanish](#)



hearWHO

hearWHO is a digits-in-noise based app for hearing screening Available in Spanish, English, Russian, and Chinese

[English](#)



hearWHOpro

hearWHOpro is a digits-in-noise based app for community-based screening by health workers Available in Spanish, English, Russian, and Chinese

Make listening safe



MEDIA BRIEF ON #SAFELISTENING

To facilitate engagement
with mainstream media to
promote safe listening

[English](#) | [French](#) | [Spanish](#)



PRESS RELEASE: "WHO RELEASES NEW STANDARD TO TACKLE RISING THREAT OF HEARING LOSS"

[English](#) | [Arabic](#) | [Chinese](#) |
[French](#) | [Russian](#) | [Spanish](#)



WHO GLOBAL STANDARD FOR SAFE LISTENING VENUES AND EVENTS

Includes 6 important components
establishing a standard for safe
listening in venues and events
(clubs, discos, etc)

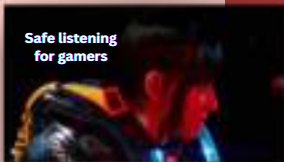
[English](#) | [French](#) | [Spanish](#)



BE HEALTHY BE MOBILE, HANDBOOK ON mSafeListening

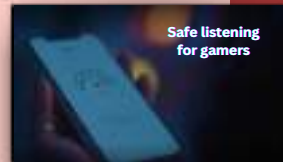
Raise awareness among
adolescents and parents
through a digital health
campaign: mSafeListening

[English](#)



SAFE LISTENING VIDEO FOR GAMERS

[English](#) | [Other Languages](#)



SAFE LISTENING VIDEO FOR GAMERS

[English](#) | [Other Languages](#)

Rehabilitation



PREFERRED PROFILE FOR HEARING-AID TECHNOLOGY SUITABLE FOR LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

Presents features of hearing aids suitable
for all: the essential requirements and
desirable features

[English](#)

Community resources



FLYER- TIPS FOR HEARING AID USERS

Offers handy tips and solutions for hearing aids in an easy-to-understand format.

[English](#) | [Spanish](#)



FLYER- EAR CARE FAQ

The flyer briefly presents answers to frequently asked questions about ear care.

[English](#) | [Spanish](#)



FLYER- HEARING LOSS IN ADULTS

Presents briefly the common signs of hearing loss, next steps and options for people with hearing loss.

[English](#) | [Spanish](#)



FLYER- CARE OF DISCHARGING EARS

The causes of ear discharge and steps to deal with a discharging ear.

[English](#) | [Spanish](#)



FLYER- MILESTONES IN CHILDREN

Milestones in children with normal hearing.

[English](#) | [Spanish](#)



FLYER- TIPS FOR HEALTHY EARS

Answers questions about ear care accompanied by some do's and don'ts.

[English](#) | [Spanish](#)



FLYER- HEARING LOSS IN CHILDREN

The flyer gives a brief look at how families can prevent and deal with hearing damage in children.

[English](#) | [Spanish](#)



FLYER- TIPS FOR SAFE LISTENING

Includes some simple safe listening measures for young people.

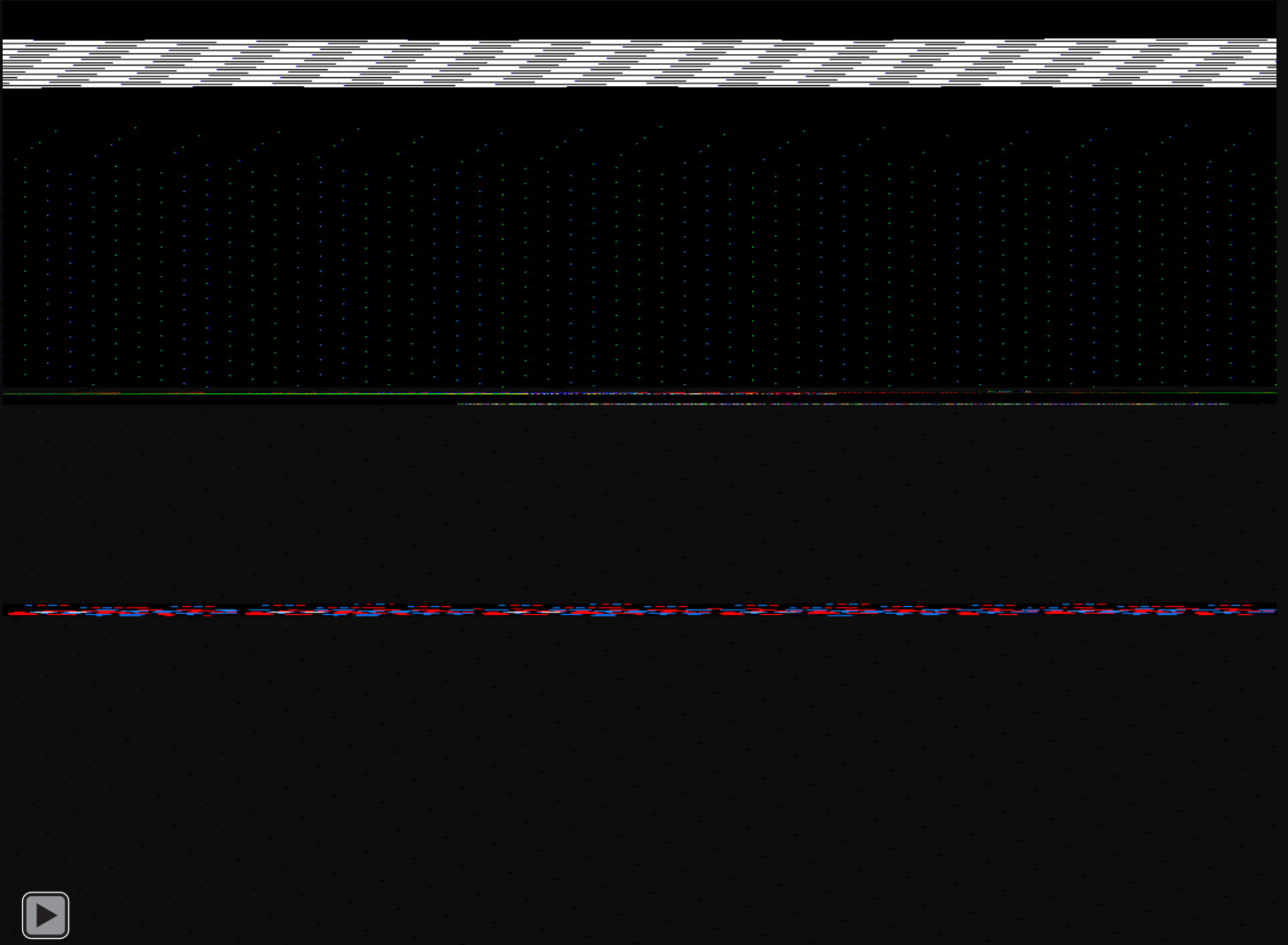
[English](#) | [Spanish](#)

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Changing Mindsets!

**Let's make ear and hearing care a
reality for all!**