

Annual Report 2019

MED  
BOX

 THE AID LIBRARY

# INTRODUCTION

MEDBOX – The Aid Library is an open-access online library aiming to increase the quality of health care worldwide.

Quality assurance and accountability are important values in humanitarian action as well as healthcare settings, which receive growing attention by affected populations, health care workers, humanitarian actors, donors and the public. The easy-to-use structure of MEDBOX facilitates the application of common health standards increasing the impact as well as the quality of the different interventions carried out by health workers.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

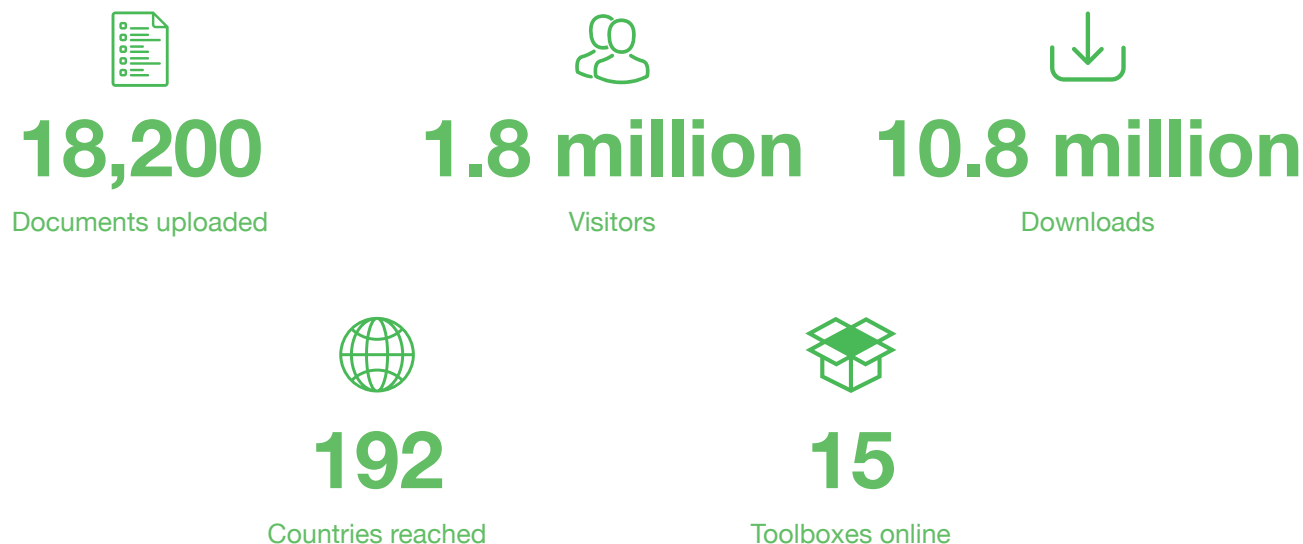
Since its launch in October 2013, **MEDBOX** has achieved a remarkable reputation. The growing numbers of views, downloads, and an enormous increase in users, are an excellent testament to our work in terms of quality and utility.

In 2019, **MEDBOX** was able to realize three new toolboxes thanks to the generous support of our various partners. In addition, great effort was invested in the technical infrastructure and enhanced features. **MEDBOX** 2.0 will go live at the beginning of March 2020! **MEDBOX** will then be available in French, Spanish and Russian. This will make it easier for users from francophone Africa, Latin America, Central Asia or Eastern Europe to use **MEDBOX**, as it will eliminate any language barriers when navigating or searching in **MEDBOX**. Further, new features such as access to the country pages via a world map or improved search filters via Advanced Search will be available. Be curious and visit **MEDBOX** 2.0 starting March 2020.

## CURRENT STATUS – IN NUMBERS AND FACTS

The numbers of users, downloads and views have steadily increased since the launch in October 2013. **MEDBOX** has collated more than 18,000 documents in various languages in nearly 800 sections and categories.

Our **MEDBOX** team continuously works on keeping the categories up to date.



**MEDBOX** can proudly look back on a successful year. The number of users has doubled with over 2,000 visitors per day on a frequent basis. As of today, over 1.8 million people worldwide are **MEDBOX** users!

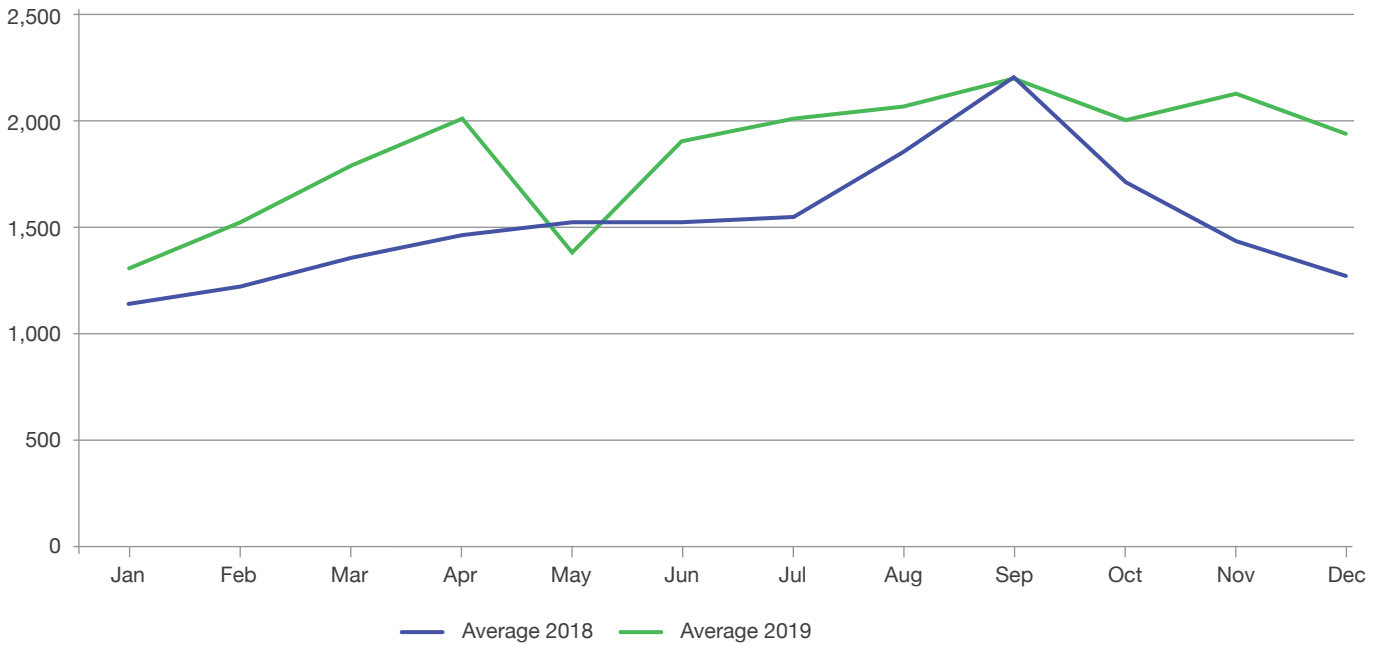


Figure 1: Average daily visitors 2018 compared to 2019

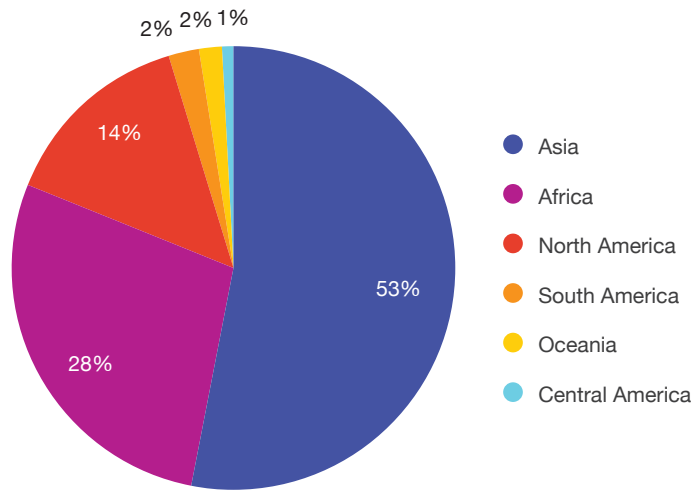


Figure 2: Visitor split by region (excluding Europe) for 2019

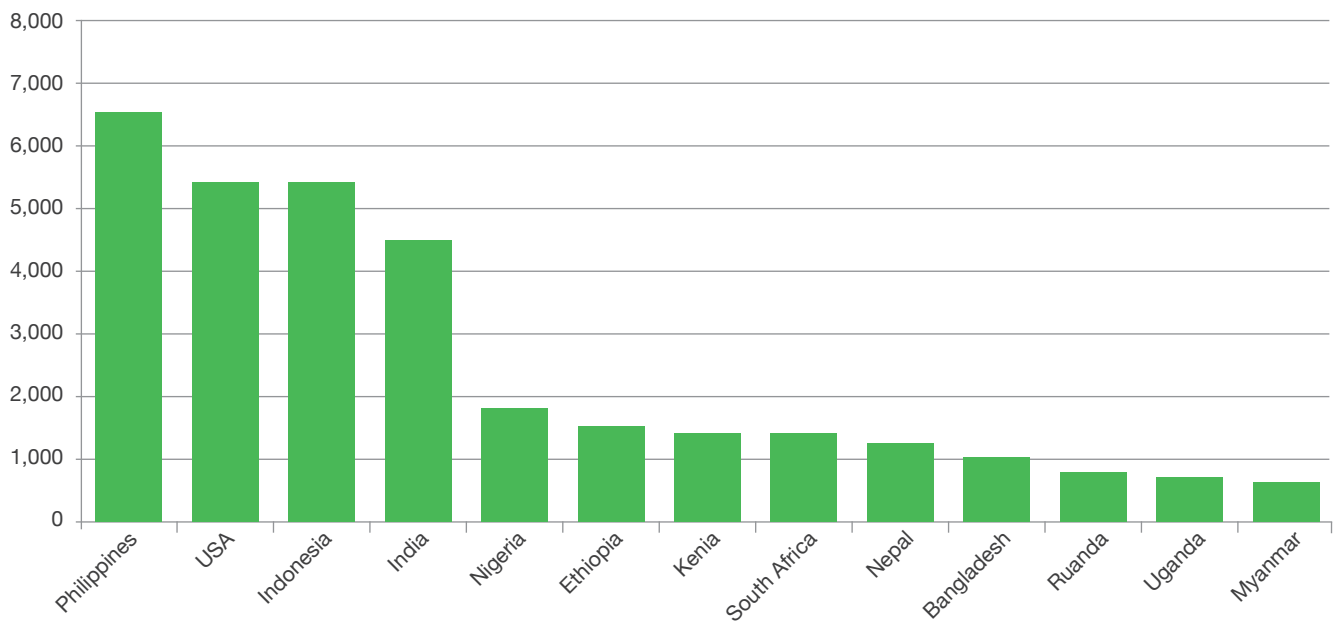


Figure 3: Visitor split by country (excluding Europe) for 2019

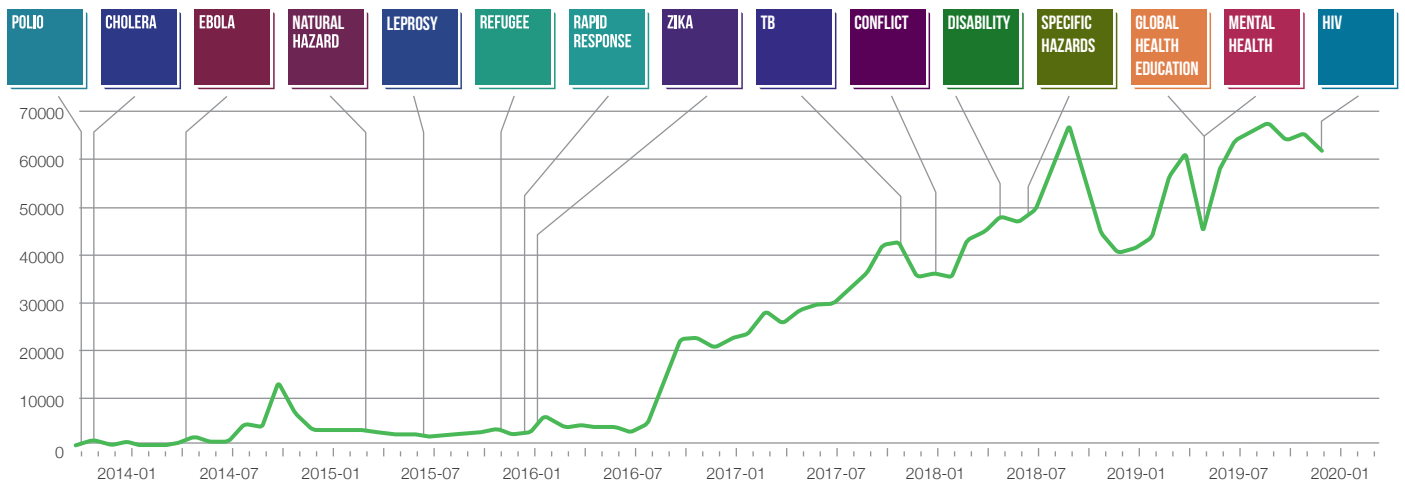


Figure 4: Development of visitor numbers since launch of Medbox in October 2013

MEDBOX has become an important platform for quality resources in humanitarian aid and health action worldwide. Staying up to date, always reacting immediately to new crises and challenges has certainly contributed to the success story of MEDBOX.

Looking back on the goals set last year, we can thankfully say that many of them have been achieved, some of them are on its way and some others will be successfully carried out in the upcoming months with the great help of our partners and users around the world.

## RANKING OF CATEGORIES

As in the last years the MEDBOX Team revised the existing categories, reorganized some subcategories and removed outdated information in order to maintain the high quality of information.

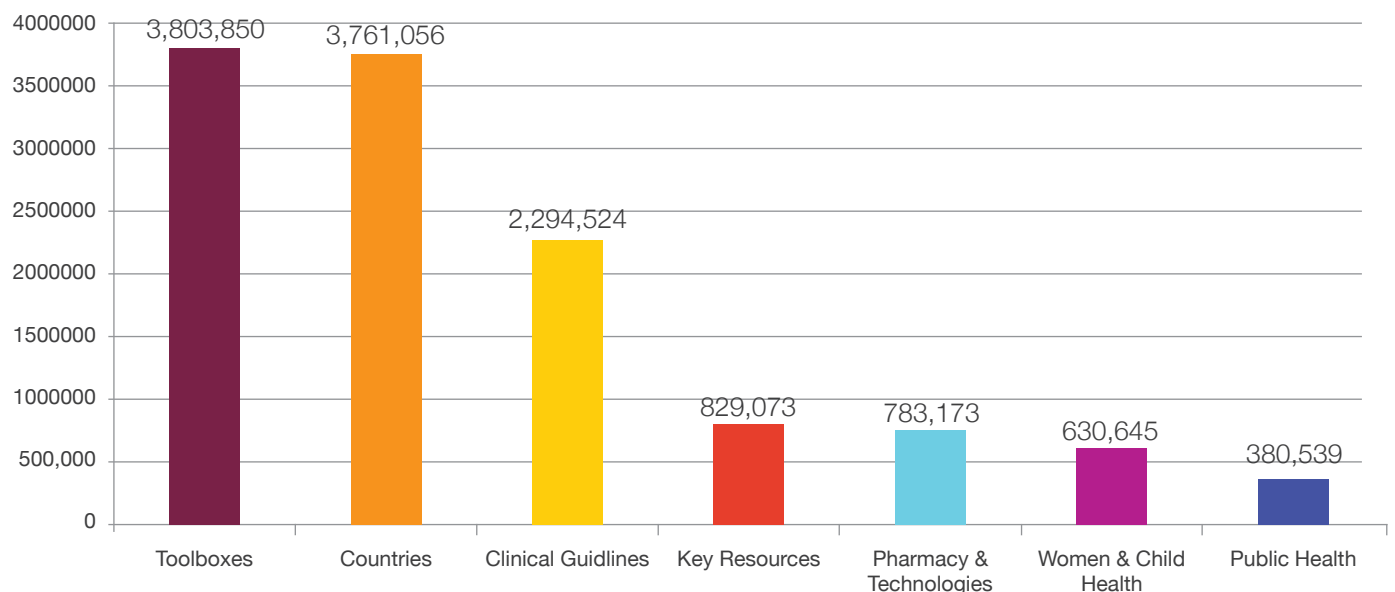


Figure 5: Ranking of categories by downloads in 2019

# 1. COUNTRIES

The **COUNTRIES** section is usually among the **MEDBOX** favourites. Therefore, it is no surprise that it is ranked second on the list of the most popular categories last years – surpassed only by the toolboxes. In the **COUNTRIES** category there are more than 6,200 documents included for 35 countries which have been viewed more than 4.5 million times and downloaded more than 3.7 million times.

With the launch of **MEDBOX** 2.0, you will have different ways to select a country:

- Click directly on the world map and choose a country or a region
- Select a country from the drop-down list
- Type in directly the desired country in the search field

You will now see all documents with a special country focus. So far, we have researched 35 countries and structured those country-specific documents into 14 subcategories. In the coming years, we hope to be able to conduct additional research and subsequently make further countries available in a similar comprehensive manner. At the moment, we are in the process of elaborating information on all francophone countries in Africa.



*Graphic 1: The new country navigation with an interactive world map*

## 2. TOOLBOXES

The **TOOLBOXES** are a special feature of the **MEDBOX** online library. The **TOOLBOXES** contain practical, up-to-date information on select topics in a single page. This enables users to quickly get an overview of and access the different types of documents ranging from clinical guidelines, community health work papers, disabled people information, IEC material to policy papers. Currently, the 15 **TOOLBOXES** cover epidemic outbreaks, disasters, diseases and other aspects such as: EBOLA, NATURAL HAZARDS, CONFLICT, ZIKA, TB, CHOLERA, LEPROSY, POLIO, RAPID RESPONSE, REFUGEE, DISABILITY, and SPECIFIC HAZARDS.

In 2019, we launched three new **TOOLBOXES**:

**MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX** and the **GLOBAL HEALTH EDUCATION TOOLBOX** in May 2019; **HIV TOOLBOX** in December 2019.

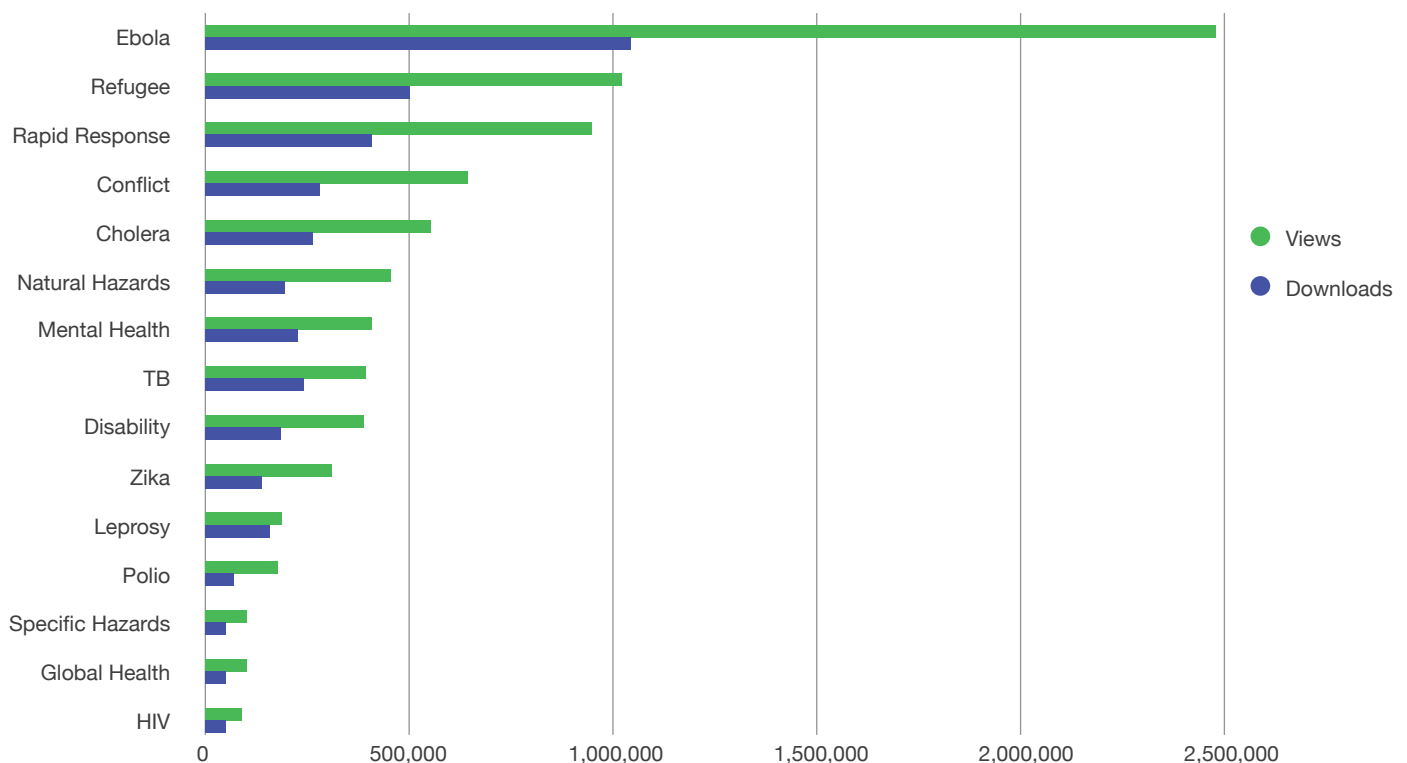


Figure 6: Top 10 Toolbox ranking by views and downloads since their launch

## MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX

Mental health is still not a priority in many low and middle-income countries (LMIC) which carry the greatest mental health burden and suffer the greatest mental health treatment gaps. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), “More than 80% of people experiencing mental health conditions [...] are without any form of quality, affordable mental health care. It is well known that people living with mental health conditions are more likely to face other physical health problems (e.g. HIV, TB, non-communicable diseases), causing early mortality of 10-20 years”. Moreover, suicide mortality is close to 800,000 deaths per year, disproportionately affecting young people and elderly women in low- and middle-income countries. It is not surprising to know that “mental health conditions are especially common for people affected by humanitarian crises and other forms of adversity such a sexual violence, violence towards children, etc.” (Source: WHO 2020).

There cannot be health for all without mental health for all! It is an imperative for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to put mental health in the hands of individual citizens through enabling them access, and use of quality, reliable, mental health information or in the words of our international partner and mental health expert, Didier Demassosso, a clinical psychologist, volunteering for HIFA and MHIN-AFRICA as country representative for Cameroon and Knowledge Exchange Assistant, respectively: *“The democratization of the access to and availability of mental healthcare information is not only a prerequisite for universal health coverage (UHC) but it is as well one of the only ways to improve on mental health literacy a core element of mental health promotion pivotal for informed mental healthcare decisions. MEDBOX positions itself in a context whereby the use of information and communication technologies, notably internet and mobile phone, is enabling greater, easier and faster access to mental health information. The need to invest much more in the access to and availability of mental health information in the coming years is justified since the world is experiencing presently a mental health crisis and epidemic”.*

**MEDBOX** aims towards being tailored to the particular need for quality literature and resources on mental health. The **MEDBOX** team understand the importance of access to such resources for mental health workers when it comes to raising awareness, focusing on prevention and carrying out efficient action work in communities. Hence, a team of experts created the **MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX** which has been available since beginning of April 2019. The **MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX** is gaining more and more popularity among **MEDBOX** users for its up to date, diverse and practical content. Figure 7 demonstrates that the documents have already been very frequently used in the few months since launch of the toolbox and thus underlines the importance of the **MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX**.

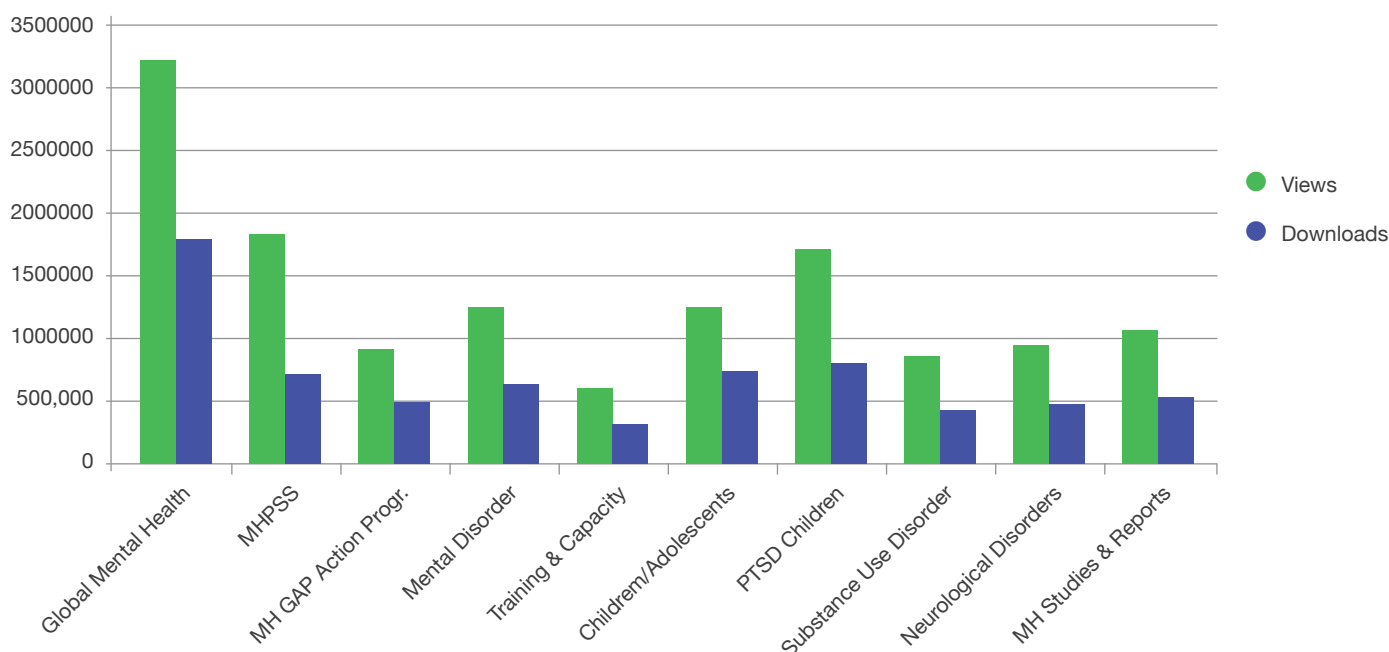


Figure 7: Views/Downloads of the Mental HealthToolbox by categories from May-Dec 2019

Of course, this could have not been done without the support of generous partners such as the Kindermissionswerk, providing the needed financial resources for the **MEDBOX** team to create additional subcategories in the **MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX** like the relevant topic “Post-traumatic stress disorder in children”. This urgent and complex issue is affecting approximately 40% of the children worldwide due to increasing conflicts, wars, violence against children, and other traumatic events. The section includes guidelines for psychosocial support, background papers on children’s rights and child protection, sexual abuse documents, best practice examples, educational materials, and PTSD documents posted in various humanitarian contexts such as war and flight or natural disasters among other related resources.



One in five people living in a conflict zone suffer from some form of mental health disorder highlighting the need of raising awareness about such a silent crisis. Conflicts and trauma lead a big part of the world's population to serious long-term mental health and psychosocial consequences. Therefore, some of the most relevant categories in the **MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX** are related to psychosocial support such as community-based mental health care, sexual and gender-based violence, posttraumatic stress disorder, inter-culturality, war, conflict, human rights, training and capacity building supporting material, children and adolescent mental health and resources aimed to work against stigmatization, marginalization and social exclusion.

Renovabis has been another key partner that provided financial support and ignited the idea to expand **MEDBOX** literature resources to East European regions dealing with some of the aforementioned issues. Consequently, the **MEDBOX** team invested Renovabis' support in qualified expertise focused on literature in Russian and Ukrainian.

The **MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX** is one of the most relevant **TOOLBOXES** as of today and will continue to be in the near future due to the fast-growing need for quality literature resources as mental illness is growing in the world. **MEDBOX** uses trustworthy sources as guideline and develops its content alongside the main objectives of the WHO action plan for mental health:

- Provide literature resources that supports and facilitate comprehensively
- Integrated mental health and social care services in community-based settings
- Implement documents with strategies for promotion and prevention in mental health
- Strengthen information systems, evidence and research making use of the diverse categories available in the **MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX** and implementation of new ones

Mental illness is connected to all areas of our lives and through sharing the resources provided in the **MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX**, this can contribute to help others with mental health issues. There is always room for improvement and growth. For that reason, the **MEDBOX** team keeps focusing on expanding its scope in 2020 which is a key year for being the last year of the WHO's comprehensive mental health action plan, and the start of the Special Initiative for Mental Health also by WHO. The Special Initiative for Mental Health extends until 2023 with the vision that "all people achieve the highest standard of mental health and well-being".

## GLOBAL HEALTH EDUCATION TOOLBOX

Global Health, a key area for international cooperation and global governance, is still under construction in many areas of the world, including countries in the minority world, like Germany. **MEDBOX** decided to join in filling the gap by providing a selection of documents and other sources of information that facilitate the exchange, teaching and learning processes. However, further support and collaboration was necessary in order to promote and facilitate the entry into learning and teaching about Global Health, to enable continuous self-study, and promote peer-group-learning as well as blended-learning activities. As a result, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) funded a very relevant project through which the **MEDBOX** team were able to create a collection of high-quality and up-to-date materials that were launched under the **GLOBAL HEALTH EDUCATION TOOLBOX** label.

The aforementioned **MEDBOX** tool consists of a structured collection of practical resources such as background information, handbooks, brochures, online courses alongside promotional and hands-on materials. The content of the toolbox focuses on different key topics of GHE, such as: Global Burden of Disease, Social Determinants of Health, Planetary Health, Global Health Ethics, Health Equity

& Equality, Global Health Financing, and Sustainable Development Goals. The target group of the project are practitioners in Global Health, development and international cooperation as well as interested students and teachers. The free access and easy-to-use structure make the Global Health Education Toolbox eligible not only for personal studying but also for peer-group-learning as well as blended-learning projects.

Since its launch in May 2019, this efficient toolbox has been widely distributed among international partners of MEDBOX targeting relevant groups via e-mail and newsletters, publications as well as links to the GLOBAL HEALTH EDUCATION TOOLBOX on their websites.

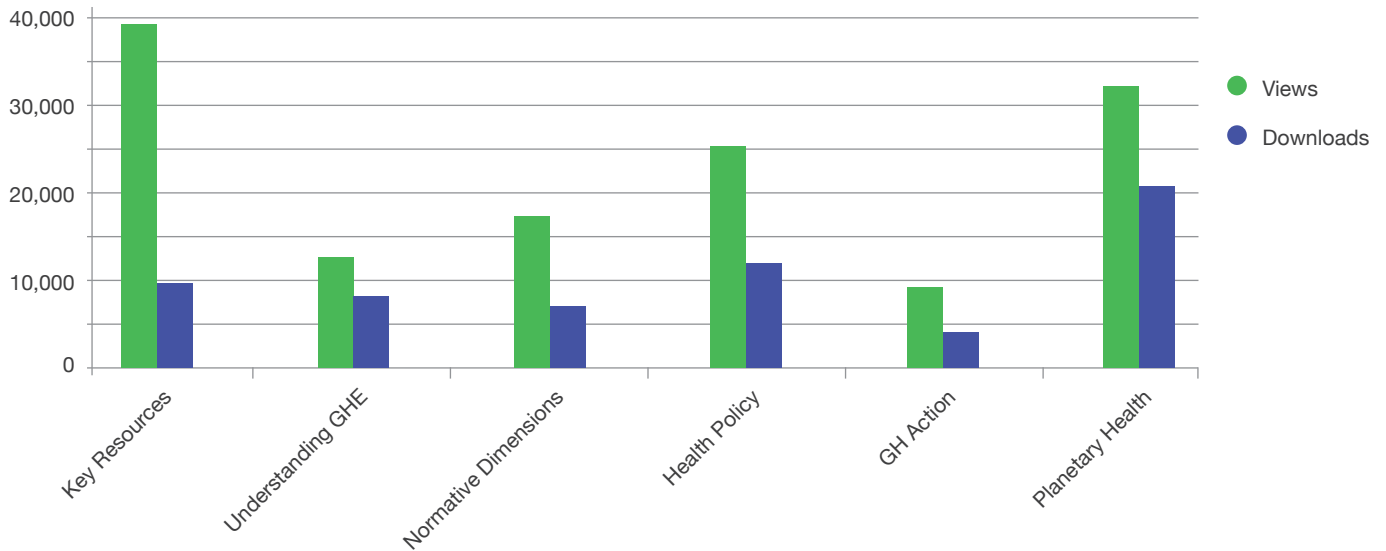


Figure 8: Views/Downloads Global Health Education Toolbox by categories May-Dec 2019

Moreover, MEDBOX has been presenting this successful project in events related to Global Health, Global Health summer schools, seminars, lectures and conferences around Germany. We have been given the opportunity to directly discuss the project with both practitioners and experts in the field as well as interested students heading in the same direction. MEDBOX continuously keeps evaluating and updating the content of the GLOBAL HEALTH EDUCATION TOOLBOX. The ultimate aim is to efficiently adapt to its users' needs and any developments in this new area of health that is becoming more and more relevant every day.



Picture 1: Presentation of the Global Health Education Toolbox at Germany's largest public health congress "Armut und Gesundheit", 14-15.03.2019

## HIV TOOLBOX

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) continues to pose a challenge to the health of people worldwide. Discovered around 40 years ago, nowadays efficient medication for prevention and treatment have been developed, promising people living with HIV a life expectancy comparable to other people. This change, from a deadly to a potential manageable disease, represents the big shift of the HIV epidemic and response. But this success should not cover up that there are still great challenges that need to be addressed: Despite a decline in numbers of people infected and dying from HIV, as well as improved testing, treatment and care possibilities worldwide, there are remaining

difficulties and inequalities that need to be specifically targeted. Therefore, the new **HIV TOOLBOX** collates the most important documents, guidelines and materials for health care personnel, health advocates, politicians and social workers, to contribute to the improvement of the life of people living with HIV around the globe. The development of the **HIV TOOLBOX** was made possible by the financial support of Misereor.

Worldwide, there are still around 38 million people living with HIV, of which 1.7 million are children under 15, and an estimate of 1.7 million people become newly infected every year. Every year around 770 000 people are dying because of deadly consequences of the disease. HIV is unequally distributed worldwide with the vast majority of people infected living in low- or middle-income countries: More than two-thirds of people infected living in Africa (71%), 16% live in Asia and the Pacific, and only 6% in Europe and North America.<sup>1</sup> The highest number of new infections happens in so-called key populations: men who have sex with men, people in prisons, sex workers, people who inject drugs and transgender people.<sup>2</sup> In many societies worldwide these people are facing daily discrimination – an HIV infection and associated stigmatisation adds onto that. The **HIV TOOLBOX** has its own category reflecting the specified need of these key populations, giving guidance and orientation for the work and care with these groups.

Children and adolescents infected with HIV are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of the disease. These consequences include physical and psychological impairment with long-term effects such as a suppressed immune system. Despite declining numbers of infections, HIV is among the main causes of death of children in sub-Saharan Africa and only around the half of all children infected can take their medications regularly. Therefore, the **MEDBOX** team integrated a large category for children and adolescents living with HIV in the **HIV TOOLBOX**. This category, kindly supported by the Kindermissionswerk e.V., emphasizes the need of this vulnerable group for special treatment and care beyond the medical aspects.

In the last years there have been several targets defined to strengthen efforts of the global community to improve the situation of patients worldwide through adequate disease management. The HIV care continuum refers to the need of continuous treatment and care for patient to manage their disease, from testing over treatment with the aim of suppression of the virus. UNAIDS launched the ambitious target of ‘90-90-90’ by 2020, calling for 90% of all people infected being tested, 90% of these persons having access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) and 90% of people receiving ART to have viral suppression. Viral suppression is the key goal for an individual patient to live a life with least harm from the disease and with no risk of transmitting it to others, summarized in the slogan ‘undetectable – untransmittable’. However, in 2018 these numbers were still unmet: 79% of all people infected had access to HIV testing and knew their status, of these 78% had access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) and 86% of them had viral suppression.<sup>3</sup> The biggest gaps are found in key populations and certain regions, including western and central Africa, eastern Europe and some Asian countries.

The Sustainable Development Goals included ‘ending the AIDS epidemic until 2030’ as one of their targets. To meet the ambitious target, the World Health Organization (WHO) developed a global strategy for the fight against HIV from 2016-2021. A progress report identified the following areas for better global response to the ongoing challenges of HIV: Accelerating progress to speed up the decline of people infected with HIV by addressing specific gaps identified by data collection; combining HIV and other services e.g. sexual and reproductive health or TB response; scaling up point-of-care diagnostics and self-testing; improving access to drugs and diagnostics; addressing social and structural determinants beyond the health-care sector. Best practice examples of these steps are highlighted in the **HIV TOOLBOX**, with the aim of showing that improvement is possible and feasible.

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1 <https://www.who.int/gho/hiv/en/> (accessed 28.01.2020)

2 *Progress report on HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections 2019. Accountability for the global health sector strategies, 2016–2021. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019 (WHO/CDS/HIV/19.7)*

3 <https://www.hiv.gov/federal-response/pepfar-global-aids/global-hiv-aids-overview> (accessed 28.01.2020)

The improvements in diagnostic, treatment and care of HIV have been remarkable and only be made possible through partnerships and collaborations of different sectors, but also through the ongoing care and support of all individuals working for and with people with HIV. The success gives a positive sign, that an end of the epidemic is feasible, though ambitious. The **HIV TOOLBOX** contributes to the positive development with a broad set of documents and resources available for the differing needs of actors and target population.

The **MEDBOX** team launched the **HIV TOOLBOX** on the World AIDS Day on 1 December 2019. In the very short timespan of one month, we have recorded a high number of views and downloads for the **HIV TOOLBOX**. As shown in figure 9, the most used categories are the Clinical Aspects, Treatment & Prevention and the Children & Adolescents. The team is now working on additional categories for Training & Capacity Building as well as Life Skills Education.

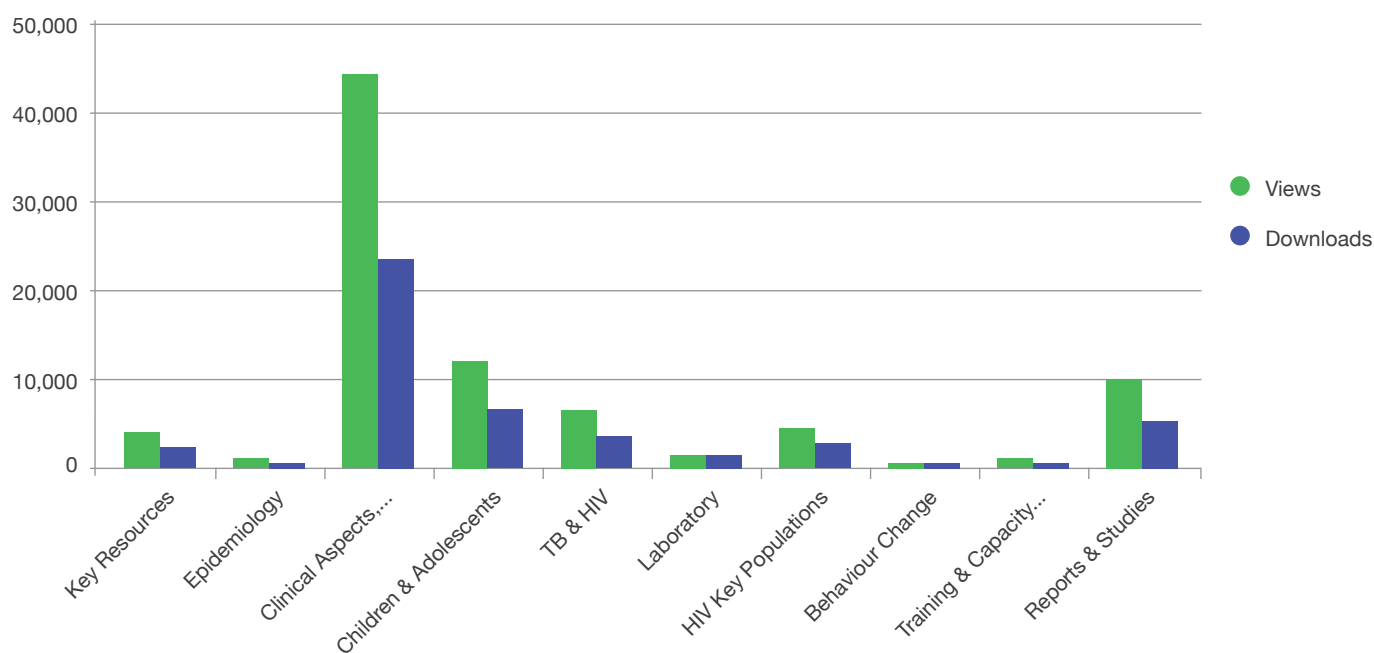


Figure 9: Views/Downloads of the HIV Toolbox by categories in December 2019

# OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Like every year, **MEDBOX** presented its activities at several conferences and events. **MEDBOX** was represented at the conference *Armut und Gesundheit* in Berlin in March, at German Society for Tropical Medicine and Global Health (DTG) in Munich, and at the *UPDATE-Conference Humanitarian & Development Aid* in April.

The first week of June 2019 more than 24,000 Rotary members from 170 countries were gathering in Hamburg, Germany to attend the *110<sup>th</sup> Annual Rotary International Convention*. During the convention, **MEDBOX** was present through one of our partners, creating awareness about the different resources available in our medical encyclopedia relating to world issues like global mental health, refugee migration, and others.

In September, **MEDBOX** was represented with a booth at the *11<sup>th</sup> European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health* in Liverpool, UK. Many congress participants were interested in **MEDBOX**, both as an important resource for their practical work and for the contribution of documents for the further development of **MEDBOX**.

In October, **MEDBOX** was an exhibitor at the trade fair *Engagement Weltweit* in Bonn-Siegburg, Germany. There, the team had the opportunity to present **MEDBOX** to students, NGO staff and the interested public with a specific focus on the **GLOBAL HEALTH EDUCATION TOOLBOX**.

Additionally, **MEDBOX** was highlighted during several seminars and workshops organized by the Medical Mission Institute in Würzburg. The Institute has an outstanding reputation in teaching and education of different interest groups in various formats, including seminars for students, preparatory courses for medical doctors or laboratory courses.

Outside of Germany, the institute provides teaching through online courses, practical training, as well as scientific collaboration. The **MEDBOX** accompanies the institute's lecturers and instructors on their respective missions and functions as a popular resource especially in low-resources settings.



# OUTLOOK

The **MEDBOX** team is proud to announce the launch of **MEDBOX 2.0** at the beginning of March 2020. After a long period of hard work, including many hours of reviewing ideas for improvements, constant finetuning to our users' needs, and technical development, **MEDBOX** will get a new interface and a few new features. **MEDBOX** will soon be available in English, French, Spanish and Russian, which will make it easier for users from francophone Africa, Latin America or Eastern Europe to use **MEDBOX**. Additional features, such as access to the country page via a world map or improved search filters, will be available as well. Be curious and visit **MEDBOX 2.0** starting March 2020. We will gladly receive your feedback on the new design and enhancements.

The team will keep on working on the evolution of **MEDBOX**, with new **TOOLBOXES** already in the pipeline as well as continuously updating of the available content. We are currently working with "Apotheker helfen e.V." on the development of a new toolbox for antimicrobial resistance: the **AMR TOOLBOX** will be launched in April 2020. In addition to that, we are planning to improve our communication strategies and platforms to keep our users informed about our latest work.

# PARTNERSHIPS

The **MEDBOX** Team would like to thank all our partners who have supported **MEDBOX** since the beginning. We always like to welcome new partners who would like to support us with their expertise or financially.



# SOCIAL MEDIA



Please visit our homepage at [www.medbox.org](http://www.medbox.org).

Additionally, you can follow latest developments of the **MEDBOX** project on Facebook, or Twitter.

# CONTACT

**MEDBOX** is brought to you by the Medical Mission Institute, Advisory Group for International Health, based in Wuerzburg, Germany.

Feel free to contact us for further information at [info@medbox.org](mailto:info@medbox.org)

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