

WORLD STROKE ORGANISATION

STRATEGY 2016 – 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

The World Stroke Organization (WSO) is the world's leading global organization in the fight against stroke. Each year 17 million people suffer stroke worldwide; of these nearly 6 million die and another 5 million are permanently disabled. Stroke is the second leading cause of death and the third leading cause of disability in lost disability-adjusted life years (DALYs). Yet, at least half of all strokes are potentially preventable with appropriate awareness and prevention. Furthermore, given the strong links between stroke and dementia, preventable dementia is also a key objective.*

The WSO was established in October 2006 through the merger of the International Stroke Society and the World Stroke Federation with the purpose of creating one world voice for stroke. Today, WSO's membership spans 85 countries and includes more than 2,700 individual members and over 60 society members.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Since being established in 2006, WSO has had many significant achievements. These include, amongst others: close collaboration with WHO and the UN ECOSOC and recognition of the WSO as the lead global stroke body; involvement with the WHO Global Action Plan for Non-Communicable Disease (NCDs); implementation of a wide range of educational activities conducted around the world such as the ABC program and the on-line learning resource the World Stroke Academy; a highly successful international journal, the International Journal of Stroke, which has achieved an impact factor of 4; many thousands of people in countries across the world each year raising awareness of stroke on the annual World Stroke Day; collaborations with a wide variety of global, regional and national organisations; the launch of The Global Bill of Rights; the launch of Global Stroke Services Guidelines and Action Plan; the Toolkit for formation of Stroke Support Societies; and very successful World Stroke Congresses which have provided a stimulus for regional policy initiatives in stroke. Other notable successes have been a strong and representative Board structure with integration of stroke support organizations and a geographically balanced, diverse Board structure.

However, WSO also faces important and significant challenges. Our primary challenge is financial; we need to increase our income to enable us to fulfil our mission and build on our achievements. There are a lot of opportunities for non-pharmaceutical-funding that are still untapped but until today we have relied mainly on funding from pharmaceutical companies and our biennial congresses. While our membership has grown, there are significant opportunities to expand it further. We need to be clearer on our priorities, including geographic focus, so that our limited resources can be applied most effectively. Recognition and awareness of the WSO has strengthened considerably in recent years, but we still have a lot of work to do. Significant work has been done at a WHO and UN level to place stroke at the forefront of the global health agenda, but the involvement needs to be even stronger with joint projects. The WSO has been lacking young stroke professionals, but with the creation of the Young Stroke Professionals network there is a potential to increase engagement with young stroke professionals and advocates. When compared to other comparable global bodies, we are still tiny in terms of our financial base and this has a major effect on the scale of our activities. This is in stark contrast to the importance of stroke as the second leading cause of death and a leading cause of long-term disability. Major growth must be a priority for us to fulfil our mission.

**Throughout the document, stroke includes stroke and preventable dementias*

3. VISION

The WSO does not currently have a statement of its vision. It is proposed that the Strategy 2016 – 2020 should include a vision which encapsulates WSO's hopes, aspirations and motivations. The vision will also provide a context for working with others who share our aspiration.

WSO's vision is proposed as: **"A life free of stroke"**

4. MISSION

The WSO mission defines its purpose. This strategy does not propose any change to the mission. The scope of activities to fulfil it also remains largely unchanged (there has been some redrafting to produce more clarity).

"The WSO mission is to reduce the global burden of stroke through prevention, treatment and long term care"

We aim to accomplish our mission by a series of actions that:

- *Foster the best standards of practice*
- *Increase stroke awareness among populations and health professionals*
- *Influence policies for stroke prevention and improved health services*
- *Facilitate advocacy for better care and research relevant to people with stroke*
- *Provide stroke education in collaboration with public and private organizations*

- *Foster the development of systems and organisations for long term support of stroke survivors and their families*
- *Promote research into stroke, preventable dementia and cerebrovascular disease*
- *Prioritize prevention of stroke, dementia and cerebrovascular disease*

5. SUCCESS IN 2020

The WSO's strategic direction towards 2020 is illustrated by the following aspirations:

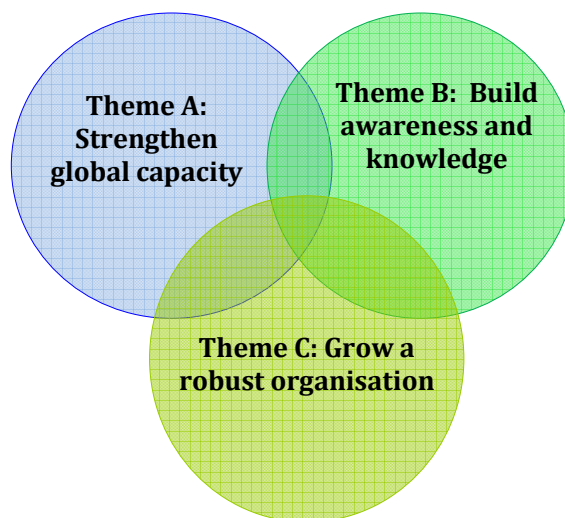
- Stroke will be recognised in its own right in proportion to its global impact.
- There will be an effective global network of Stroke Support Organisations (SSOs).
- The WSO will be the “go-to” body for advice on stroke policy.
- The WSO will be established as the “go to” global training and education body for stroke.
- The International Journal of Stroke (IJS) will have further increased its global impact.
- The WSO campaigns will have a significant global impact.
- Awareness of the WSO will have further increased significantly and WSO will be universally recognised as the lead global organisation for stroke, representing the interests of all national stroke organisations across the globe and is the international voice for stroke policy, standards and patients.
- The WSO membership will have increased significantly, proportional to the importance of the disease.
- The WSO will be financially robust, building a safe and generous financial reserve.
- The WSO will have a strengthened governance structure.
- The WSO will have revised our Bylaws to make us a more flexible and dynamic body.
- We will conduct successful World Stroke Congresses that are also profitable for the WSO.

6. STRATEGIC THEMES AND PRIORITIES

6.1 Three strategic themes

Three overarching themes are emerging for structuring and communicating the WSO strategy 2016 – 2020. Within each theme WSO will have a number of strategic priorities for the 4 years to 2020. The three inter-dependent themes are proposed as:

- A. Strengthen global capacity to reduce the impact of stroke.** This theme has priorities relating to: primary and secondary prevention of stroke and dementia, stroke services, research, rehabilitation, long term care, policies, guidelines and international relationships.
- B. Build awareness and knowledge of stroke.** This theme addresses issues relating to: awareness and profile of stroke and of the WSO, World Stroke Campaign, education and the International Journal of Stroke.
- C. Grow a robust organisation.** This theme addresses issues relating to: The WSO funding, membership, administrative resources, organisation and governance.



6.2 Strategic priorities

The WSO has limited resources and, as has been noted earlier, our greatest challenge is financial. The future success and ability of WSO to deliver this strategy will depend on securing increased income and putting in place more executive management and administrative resource. Consequently the most urgent priorities in the shorter term relate to Theme C Growing a Robust Organisation, particularly priorities C/1 Strengthen WSO finances, C/2 Build membership and C/3 Increase administrative resources. Other urgent priorities either enable these organisational development priorities (because they raise money and/or support member recruitment; for example B/2 provide world class training and education resources) and/or are core to continuing delivery of our mission in the shorter term (ie A/1 Widen and strengthen partnerships, B/1 Implement the World Stroke Campaign strategy, and C/4 Engage young stroke professionals)

The priorities within each theme are summarised below. The urgent ones have been identified.

Theme A: Strengthen global capacity to reduce the impact of stroke.

Priority A/1: URGENT Widen and strengthen partnerships. We will widen and strengthen the range of organisations/groups with which WSO has partnerships in order to co-ordinate policy development and other initiatives.

Priority A/2: Enable and support research. We have identified global stroke research priorities to inform and influence funders of research, and highlight opportunities for international collaborative research. These relate to our mission of reducing the global burden of stroke. Key themes include establishment of stroke centres, trials networks, establishing a global chronic disease prevention initiative, standardising the practice of post-stroke rehabilitation and evaluating the best ways to improve life after stroke. The WSO does not currently have the aspiration to be a grant funding institution.

Priority A/3: Development of SSOs. We will work towards establishing, supporting and strengthening a global network of SSOs, particularly in low and middle income countries (LMIC).

Priority A/4: Produce and disseminate guidelines and standards. We will produce, update and communicate guidelines and standards for delivery of quality stroke care.

Theme B: Build awareness and knowledge of stroke.

Priority B/1: URGENT Implement the World Stroke Campaign strategy. We will ensure that the WSC strategy 2016 – 2020 is implemented effectively, and outcomes evaluated, with a view to further strengthening engagement with the campaign and with World Stroke Day. An initial theme will be used “Face the Facts- Stroke is treatable”.

Priority B/2: URGENT Enable world class training and education resources. We will, ourselves and in partnership with other organisations, develop and provide world class continuing medical training and education resources.

Priority B/3: Impact of International Journal of Stroke. We will work towards the IJS having the greatest global reach for research and clinical practice in stroke.

Priority B/4: Awareness of and engagement with WSO. We will raise awareness of WSO globally including making effective use of digital media. Both internal and external communications are vital to inform on activities and involve and motivate members. Communication also serves to gain external allies, promote WSO advocacy goals and activities and raise visibility to attract various partners.

Theme C: Grow a robust organisation.

Priority C/1: URGENT Strengthen WSO finances. We will identify opportunities to produce a sustainably greater income and generate reserves. This is probably the most urgent priority. We need to consider whether we hire professional fundraisers. The aim is that income from membership, congress and the journal will fully pay for all expenses related to the Secretariat.

Priority C/2: URGENT Grow membership. Our aim is to grow membership and increase income from membership, whilst also ensuring that members receive good value. We will review the specific benefits and overall offer for members; and we will take a targeted and proactive approach to membership recruitment and retention.

Priority C/3: URGENT Increase administrative resources. We will find and allocate funds to retain more senior executive and administrative support.

Priority C/4: URGENT Engage young stroke professionals. We will focus on engaging young professionals to become involved with the WSO and its governance.

Priority C/5: Ensure world-class governance. We will continue to review and improve WSO's governance to ensure that it is efficient, fully inclusive, sustainable and transparent.



one voice
One World Voice for Stroke