

EDITORIAL

Arriving at a Vision and Mission Statement for SHAJ

Background

Over the past few decades, the Somali people have faced prolonged civil conflicts, natural disasters, and insecurity, which have significantly impacted their health indicators. The situation has been further exacerbated by millions of internally displaced persons and large population groups in need of humanitarian assistance. One in every 12 Somali women will die due to pregnancy-related causes [1, 2]. In response, the government has endorsed a strategy for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to improve health system operations, reduce health inequities, and increase the efficiency of healthcare services.

The Somali Health Action Journal (SHAJ) was launched following an initiative in 2014 to revive the Somali-Swedish research cooperation programs, which had been suspended since the 1990s due to civil unrest. This new consortium includes representatives from Somali and Swedish universities and professionals in the Somali diaspora. The consortium's primary focus is strengthening research capacity to address the challenges in rebuilding the fragile healthcare system, ultimately aiming to improve health outcomes [3,4,5,6]. The scarcity of Somali-led research publications highlighted the need for national academic institutions to engage in health research development and dissemination [7].

SHAJ was officially launched as a peer-reviewed open-access journal on October 27, 2021. Its mission is to disseminate updated evidence to influence healthcare policy, decisions, and practice. While it was deemed essential for national academic institutions to own SHAJ, practical considerations led to it being hosted by the Somali-Swedish Researchers' Association (a small Swedish non-governmental organization) and temporarily

managed by the Umeå University Library.

The development of freely accessible publications must align with a vibrant vision and mission that reflects the health sector's values and goals. This editorial describes the rationale behind and how we formulated SHAJ's vision and mission. These benchmarks will guide our future work with the journal and help evaluate its progress.

During its first 30 months, SHAJ published several relevant articles. Still, there was a recognized need to make the vision and mission statements more vibrant and better aligned with recurring themes and policies in our scope of work.

SHAJ aims to facilitate the scientific writing and publication efforts of Somali academics, enhancing their research knowledge and public health practice. There is a need to scale up scientific research writing. SHAJ aims to promote additional research training and secure resource allocation from national institutions and regional and global research partners. This will involve different colleges and research centers sponsoring and coordinating opportunities for research grants.

SHAJ's governance bodies include the Editorial Board, comprised of representatives from participating Somali academic institutions, responsible for policy decisions, and leveraging professional influence to elevate the journal's profile. There is also a panel of International Advisors acting as ambassadors and mentors. The Editorial Team manages daily operations, led by a chief editor, a managing editor, responsible editors, and a layout editor (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Organisation of SHAJ

Development and significance of a new vision and mission statement

The Process

To reach our new vision and mission statement, we followed a collaborative and structured process involving both the Editorial Team and the Editorial Board. This approach ensured an active participation by all the members of these two bodies. The process illustrated in Figure 2, included:

- *Initial Briefings*: Both the Editorial Team and the Editorial Board were briefed on the current vision and mission. Each group was tasked with preparing and sharing draft statements.
- *Second-Round Meetings*: During these meetings, the drafts were discussed, and points of convergence and divergence were reviewed.
- *Consensus Summary Draft*: A two-member team was formed to create a consensus summary draft, which was then collectively reviewed.
- *Final Consensus Building*: A final draft was circulated for agreement, ensuring that all parties were aligned with the new vision and mission statements.

This methodical process helped harmonize the perspectives of both teams, resulting in unified and robust vision and mission statements. The consensual views of the two bodies had several similarities as illustrated in Table 1. Both the Editorial Team and the Editorial Board envision the journal as a leading platform for collaborative health research in the African-Somali context. They aim to disseminate evidence-based information that connects research findings with policy and practice, ultimately

aiming to improve the health system.

The Editorial Team focuses on establishing a country-based management and financial structure for SHAJ, emphasizing independence through ownership by local institutions. They also prioritize engaging local institutions, promoting the publication of Somali research in an open-access format. Additionally, they aim to mentor young Somali health academics and build research capacity. On the other hand, the Editorial Board emphasizes enhancing the quantity and quality of university-based research through mentorship. They aim to foster partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders within the health system and with international organizations. Furthermore, they prioritize research capacity building across Somali academic institutions and address health challenges through community-based research, aligning with national public policies and international commitments.

Overall, the two bodies think the journal could serve as a vital platform for advancing health research in the Somali context, bridging local expertise with international best practices to address health challenges and achieve universal health coverage goals.

The Synthesis

In the final joint meeting between selected members of the Editorial Board and the Editorial Team, two drafts of the Vision and Mission statement for SHAJ were meticulously compared and discussed. This rigorous formulation process was deemed worthwhile as it ensured that both the Editorial Team and the Board were aligned on a realistic vision for the journal, envisioning its future state in harmony with the aspirational goals of the national health system.

The resulting vision statement articulates a compelling future state for SHAJ, ensuring its alignment with the aspirations of both the journal and the broader health

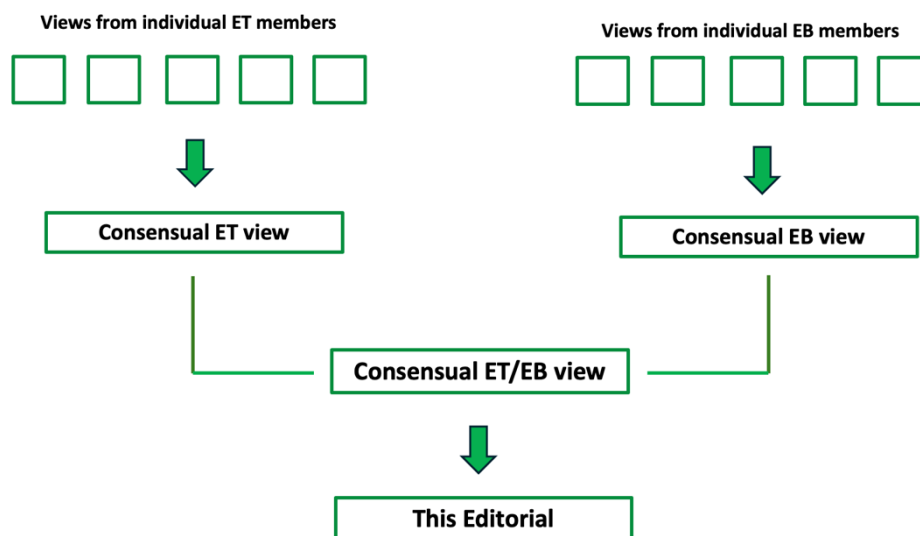


Figure 2. The process of formulating a vision and mission statement

Table 1. Results from the independent work of the Editorial Team and the Editorial Board in arriving at the vision for SHAJ and its missions.

Editorial Team	Editorial Board
Vision	Vision
Emerge as a leading African-Somali journal for collaborative health research, disseminating essential and evidence-based information that bridges the gaps between research, policy, and practice.	Promote and provide a strong health research culture and platform for Somali academics, health professionals, and intellectuals to share health-related knowledge and information, enhancing the outcomes of the health system through evidence-based practice.
Mission	Mission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build an in-country management and financial structure with independence guaranteed through ownership by a consortium of indigenous Somali institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote publication of locally generated Somali research papers or articles in an open access peer-reviewed journal.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage national institutions in promoting, increasing visibility, and widespread circulation of the journal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quantity and quality of research outputs from Somali universities through effective mentorship.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to mentorship and capacity building for young Somali health academics in scientific writing and publication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance partnerships and collaboration among local health system stakeholders while engaging with international organizations through periodic networking to align international best practices with home-grown solutions to address health problems and challenges.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce new avenues for sharing information to address primary healthcare challenges, disseminate health policy guidelines, and foster educational activities on achieving universal health coverage within the timeframe of 2030 and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote research capacity building across native academic institutions and health systems in evidence-based research through nationwide virtual or physical training, conferences, and capacity building sessions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish special issues focusing on collaborative Somali and African research, highlighting the links between social determinants, poverty, and population health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the high burden of health challenges and diseases and promote community-based research to contribute to efforts towards attaining universal health coverage targets, consistent with national public policies and international commitments.

system objectives. On the other hand, the Mission Statements delineate the specific actions and responsibilities of the journal's leadership to achieve this future state and contribute effectively to national health goals.

The final vision and mission statement for SHAJ after a consensual process between the editorial team and board is presented below.

The Implications

SHAJ aims to become a globally recognized platform for

health-related research. It will focus on disseminating essential, evidence-based information and bridging the gap between research, policy, and practice. It aspires to contribute positively to health system outcomes and promote UHC while aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Key goals include disseminating contextually relevant research that involves local communities in protecting their health, placing people at the forefront of efforts for health and well-being, and achieving UHC and other health-related SDGs by addressing the wider determinants

AGREED VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT FOR SHAJ

Vision

Establish as a globally renowned Somali journal specializing in health and health-related research. We aim to disseminate crucial, evidence-based information, bridging the divide between research, policy, and practice

Mission

- Establish an in-country management and financing mechanism, owned by a consortium of Somali academic institutions, ensuring its independence
- Engage and collaborate with Somali institutions to enhance the visibility and reach of the journal.
- Contribute to the training and mentorship of young Somali health academics in research design, scientific writing, and publication
- Share insights on primary healthcare challenges, local evidence-based solutions, health policy guidelines, and educational initiatives, with the goal of strengthening the health system and achieving universal coverage
- Foster collaboration in health research among Somalis locally, regionally, and internationally.
- Publish special issues addressing Somali health research priorities, including the correlation between socio-economic factors and population health

of health. The journal seeks to foster debates, generate policy documents, and facilitate decision-making processes. Additionally, it aims to improve evidence-based health policies by enabling researchers to disseminate their high quality findings freely and effectively, while collaborating with international institutions. It plans to become a primary public health research and communication journal both, nationally and internationally, influencing decisions related to health and health services while establishing itself as a leading Somali health journal.

The journal emphasizes collaboration with Somali academic institutions and international partners, particularly Swedish academic and public health institutions, to assist young researchers in scientific writing and publication. Capacity building and mentorship are highlighted, with the journal offering opportunities for mentorship to authors and providing courses in research design, scientific writing, and publication to young Somali health academics.

Overall, SHAJ seeks to improve medical care and advance the national health system by publishing high-quality, accessible papers and fostering collaboration among national, regional, and international health researchers.

The Roadmap

A comprehensive roadmap is needed for SHAJ to effectively achieve its vision and mission. This strategic plan will involve addressing emerging issues and regularly assessing progress. A structured operational plan with measurable goals and timelines is proposed to ensure sustainability, along with periodic gap analyses to rectify shortcomings.

Key components of this strategy include developing strong leadership through the SHAJ Editorial Board and Editorial Team. Their defined roles will uphold the journal's quality and relevance to the national health system. Additionally, emphasis is placed on research training activities, particularly for young Somali scientists, to facilitate the publication of essential health research.

Collaboration is deemed crucial, by encouraging partnerships between health professionals, academic institutions, and service delivery organizations at national, regional, and international levels. Efforts will focus on disseminating research findings using innovative electronic technologies and enhancing collaboration between public and private health programs.

SHAJ will advocate for integrating research into service delivery institutions, emphasizing evidence-based practices and community-based interventions. This includes addressing disparities in healthcare access and workforce distribution across different Somali regions.

Furthermore, SHAJ aims to foster community involvement in research through partnerships and capacity-building initiatives among health professionals and academic institutions. Overall, the strategic roadmap emphasizes collaboration, capacity-building, and the

integration of research into healthcare systems to advance the nation's health research agenda.

Finally, preparations have to be made for transferring the management of SHAJ while securing sustainable arrangements for Somali ownership.

The way forward

The vision and mission statement for SHAJ has been methodologically developed through an elaborate process. However, given the country's complexity and context, any venture of this nature is bound to encounter difficulties, regardless of how meticulous the planning has been. While challenges will inevitably arise, it is imperative to address them effectively to establish the journal on a solid foundation and ensure that its objectives are met in the foreseeable future, spreading the vision for population health equity through research partnerships [8].

The SHAJ vision and mission statement aims to bridge the disparities in the health system through organizational changes to enhance performance. This responsibility rests on the Editorial Team, Editorial Board, national health system stakeholder groups, partners, donors, federal and state governments, and participating universities. This meaningful collaboration will catalyze the momentum of indigenous Somali scientific publications, laying the groundwork for translating health research evidence into practice. Consequently, SHAJ will become an indispensable reference for the national health system and the public and private sectors, facilitating resource mobilization and capacity building to propel the health research agenda from mission to action nationwide.

On behalf of the Editorial Board and the Editorial Team
Khalif Bile Mohamud, Editor-in-Chief

Summary in Somali

CINWAAN

Diyaarinta Hiigsiga iyo Himilada Wargeyska Waxqabadka Caafimaadka Somaaliyeed

SOOKOOBID

Kaddib markii Feker wadajir ah, ay kooxda tifaftirka iyo guddiga tifaftirku ka yeesheen Wargeyska Waxqabadka Caafimaadka Somaaliyeed (WWCS), ayey isbarbardhigeen hiigsigii iyo himiladii ay koox kasti goonni u soo diyaarisay. Kaddib labadii qoraal ayey is-waafajiyeen oo isugu geeyeen hal hiigsi iyo hal himilo oo la-wadaago. Bayaanka hiigsiga iyo kan himilada ee soo baxay, waxay hubaal ahaan qeexayaan mustaqbal soo-jiidasho iyo dhiirri-gelin u leh WWCS, una abuuraya wanaag gaar ah. Aragtiyaha kama dambaysta ah ee bayanka hiigsiga iyo kan himilada WWCS, ayaa curiyeey hannaan ay isku raaceen kooxda tifaftirka iyo guddiga tifaftirka, kaas oo hoos lagu soo bandhigay.

HIIGSIGA IYO HIMILADA HORUMARKA EE LOO DIYAARIYEY JOORNAALKA

Hiigsiga

In la dhiso joornaal Soomaaliyeed oo caan ka ah caalamka oo ku takhasusay caafimaadka iyo cilmibaarista la xiriirta. Waxaannu higsanaynaa inaan faafinno xogaha caafimaad ee muhiimka ah, oo caddaymo aqooneed ku saleysan, kuwaas oo yareyn-doona farqiga u dhexeeya cilmi-baarista, siyaasadda iyo isticmaalkooda.

Himilada

- In la sameeyo hab maamul iyo hab maaliyadeed oo dalka gudhiisa ah oo ay leeyihiin ururro ay ku midaysan yihiin machadyo tacliineed oo Soomaaliyeed, oo xaqiijinaya madaxbannaanideeda
- In lala hawl-galo oo la kaashado hay'adaha Soomaaliyeed si kor loogu qaado muuqaalka, gaaritaanka iyo saamaynta joornaalka
- In uu gacan ka geysto tababaridda iyo la-talinta aqoonyahannada Soomaaliyeed ee da'da yar, xagga naqshadeynta cilmi-baarista, qoraal cilmiyeedka iyo daabacaadda
- In la wadaago aragtiyaha saameeya caqabadaha ka hor-yimaada daryeelka caafimaadka aasaasiga ah, helidda xalal maxalli ah oo caddeyn ku salaysan, habraacyada siyaasadda caafimaadka iyo dadaallada waxbarashada, iyada oo ujeedadu tahay xoojinta nidaamka caafimaadka iyo helitaanka daryeel caafimaad oo dhammeystiran
- In la kobciyo iskaashiga cilmi-baarista caafimaadka ee Soomaalida ku sugan gudaha dalka, deegaamada deriska iyo qurba-joogta Soomaaliyeed ee caalamka
- In la daabaco qoraallo cilmibaris oo saameeya mawaadiic gaar ah oo mudnaan u leh caafimaadka Soomaaliyeed, sida isku-xirka arrimaha dhaqan-dhaqaale iyo caafimaadka bulshada.

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