



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

HI has been working for 40 years to ensure that everyone has the chance to “stand tall”

Montreal, July 19th, 2022 - HI was created in 19 July 1982 in a refugee camp in Thailand. Its first operation was launched to address the injustice suffered by thousands of civilians maimed by landmines. 40 years later, HI has more than 5,000 employees working in some 60 countries for a world of solidarity and inclusion. 40 years of commitment to supporting people with disabilities, promoting respect for their dignity and defending their fundamental rights.



Gniep, 10 years old, mine victim, one of HI's first beneficiaries in 1982

Working for people with disabilities

In 1982, HI set up its first workshops producing prosthetics with locally available materials. 40 years later, the organisation continues to support people who have lost limbs: 400,000 prosthetic devices were produced and fitted between 2017 and 2022. **As pragmatism and autonomy are always at the heart of the HI's innovative projects, we are now producing prosthesis with the help of 3D printing.**



Over the years, HI has extended its field of action to include all types of disabilities and to many countries. Since its creation, **HI has operated in 86 countries**, accompanying people with disabilities in the different aspects of their lives, reinforcing their capacity to provide for themselves, facilitating access to care and education services, and **defending their rights**. HI works in collaboration with **hundreds of partner organisations**. Between 2012 and 2022, over **23 million people benefited** from HI's projects.

Campaigning against explosive weapons

HI does not stop at assisting the victims of mine accidents; it is also **engaged in demining and risk education**. A key player in humanitarian demining since 1992, HI has always placed a strong focus on the human dimension. Over the past five years, the organisation has cleared over 80 million square metres of contaminated land that has been released back to the communities.

To defend civilians and bring about sustainable changes to practices, HI conducts **international advocacy campaigns**. In the 1990s, alongside five other NGOs, HI launched the international campaign to ban anti-personnel mines, a campaign that resulted in the signing of the Ottawa Treaty in 1997. The organisation then led another successful campaign to ban cluster munitions. Today, it is campaigning against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Responding to humanitarian emergencies

From the outset, **crisis response** has been an integral part of HI's action. The organisation implements **inclusive humanitarian aid**, guiding other actors to take into account the needs of people with disabilities and vulnerable populations. Over the past five years, HI has **distributed 650,000 emergency kits** to people with disabilities and vulnerable people caught up in crises.

Preparing for the challenges of tomorrow

Over the years, HI's practices have evolved to enable it to better address certain issues, some old and some new, including strengthening inclusion, guaranteeing protection and enhancing accountability. To **develop and enhance diversity**, HI has given priority to nationalising its teams. Furthermore, an Institute has been set up to **guarantee and preserve the ethics** of the organisation's actions and positioning.

One of the major challenges ahead is **climate change**. HI has thus incorporated an environmental dimension into its field projects to support those most affected by the climate crisis and its consequences. HI is also committed to **measuring and reducing its ecological footprint**.

For its 40th anniversary, HI is reaffirming its commitment to meeting the ever-increasing needs in a world where conflicts and crises are proliferating. Guided by its four values: **humanity, inclusion, commitment and integrity**.



HI's history in ten key dates:

- 1982: HI is created in the Cambodian refugee camps in Thailand
- 1992: HI launches demining actions and, with five other NGOs, creates the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)
- 1997: Signature of the Treaty of Ottawa for the prohibition of land mines; HI becomes co-laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize
- 2005: HI launches emergency operations in Indonesia and Sri Lanka in response to the tsunami of 26th December 2004
- 2006: Signature of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to which HI contributed alongside organisations of people with disabilities
- 2008: Signature of the Treaty of Oslo for the prohibition of cluster munitions
- 2010: HI launches a response to the earthquake in Haiti
- 2013: HI launches a response to the Syrian crisis - its largest humanitarian deployment to date.
- 2020: HI is the recipient of two European Union Horizon Awards for Innovation for its projects in 3D printing of prosthetics and the use of drones for mine clearance.
- 2022: HI launches an emergency intervention in response to the crisis in Ukraine.

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