

Projects That Work 2015

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Monday, September 14, 10:30 am -12:30 pm
Birchwood Conference Center, South Africa



FAIMER is pleased to sponsor the third annual Projects That Work forum, showcasing projects that have been successfully addressing missions related to this year's The Network: Towards Unity for Health (TUFH) conference theme of "Education for Change" for three years or longer. An open worldwide call resulted in 30 submissions from which five projects were selected by an international panel of 13 reviewers. Descriptions of the selected projects follow, along with representative comments from reviewers.

Sustaining Positive Change in MDG 4 and 5 by Building "Village Arogya Banks" in Rural and Tribal India (India)

From 2006 to 2009, an infusion of Swedish development funding enabled Indian and Swedish partner organizations to establish local health services in 235 underserved villages in a rural and tribal area of central India that included 295 female health volunteers, 173 birth attendants, 112 traditional healers, 339 school teachers, and 976 panchayat raj institution members. These members helped at the village level to nurture a novel concept called "Arogya Bank" (Village Health Post), and they became change agents for the villages. The implementation of the project resulted in significant improvement in accessibility of maternal and child health services. For example, maternal morbidity and mortality has been reduced by 70%. After the expiration of international funding, the number of villages reached by the project was reduced to 100 since January 2012. The project has been sustained at that level in part with minimal user fees that cover about 40% of costs and has more recently once again begun to expand the scope of its services.

Reviewer comment: "This was a fascinating project. It addresses important health issues that are found throughout the world, it addresses manpower issues, and it brings together two disparate countries to confront a shared issue. The project incorporates gender equity, health care, human rights, and though the initial funding has stopped, the project continued. The biggest challenge is convincing healthcare professionals to stay in the rural areas and that is true in developed countries as well as less developed countries."

Presenter: Vidyadhar Balkrishna Bangal, Professor and Head, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Rural Medical College, Pravara Institute of Medical Sciences, Ahmednagar, India

Service Learning to Develop Students' Social Responsibility and Improve Women's Health (Pakistan)

Since 2010, over 100 high school and medical students from 15 different institutions supplemented the care provided by public health workers in four service learning projects in four different communities of Pakistan. The initial projects were supported by local NGOs and institutions and concentrated mainly on raising awareness about the causes, effects and prevention strategies of iron deficiency anemia (a common condition among women of reproductive age in Pakistan). By 2014 the project had attracted international partners, Flinders University (Australia) and GHETS (a USA-based NGO) which enabled it to add point-of-care testing and treatment components that have already yielded measurable positive health outcomes.

Reviewer comment: "Inspired and committed leadership. Wide variety of stakeholders including both high school and medical students, international NGOs, and a previous Projects That Work winner. Project has gone through growth stages as different stakeholders and funders have come on board. Focus on social responsibility."

Presenter: Rukhsana Ayub Aslam, Associate Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Head of Department of Health Professions Education, Al Nafees Medical College & Hospital, Isra University, Islamabad, Pakistan





“A Arte de Nascer” – The Art of Being Born (Brazil)

In 2008 this project began with a small group of volunteers in a poor rural community in northeastern Brazil using art therapy to increase the knowledge of pregnant women about gestation, birth and care of their babies. Positive results included more prenatal visits, increased breastfeeding, and more vaccinations among children from the project. After the methodology was widely publicized it was replicated in other states of Brazil. In 2010, after being selected as a “Young Champions of Maternal Health” winner by Ashoka and the Maternal Task Force, the project was invited to be adapted for the local culture in Mali, West Africa with workshops using songs, poems, stories, crafts, cinema, etc. for Francophone sub-Saharan Africa. It continues to be replicated throughout Brazil. The methodology is offered for free on the project’s website.



Reviewer comment: “This project has proven generalizability, having already been exported from Brazil to Mali. It is also innovative and interprofessional, using art therapy to promote better prenatal knowledge among needy young mothers-to-be.”

Presenter: Carolina Araújo Damasio Santos, Infectious Disease Specialist, Santos Dumont Institute, Macaíba, Brazil

Diabetes Management in Rural Communities: Student Nurses Make a Difference Using Point-of-Care Testing (Cameroon)

Begun in 2011, this project uses student nurses during community placement to address a major but previously completely neglected health problem in Cameroon by training them to use low cost point-of-care testing devices for diabetes screening and management in rural areas. After a successful pilot in which 334 people were screened and over 70% of clients confirmed marked improvements in their health, the project was adopted as part of the final year nursing curriculum for community placement. Now in its fourth year, there has been better care for diabetics and a significant decline in the incidence of diabetes in the two communities where the project has been implemented. Diabetes care units have been created and patients now pay a moderate sum for their supplies to contribute to the sustainability of the project.



Reviewer comment: “This project uses the following approaches: service learning, using students as change agents, bringing together professionals from the academics (student nurses and faculty) with those at the periphery (health centre nurses). It demonstrates sustainability and effectiveness in a low resource setting.”

Presenter: Aminkeng Zawuo Leke, Deputy Director, St. Francis School of Health Sciences, Buea, Cameroon

Improving Health of Women in Garment Industries through Needs Assessment and Peer Health Education (India)

Since 2012 the project has been addressing basic health issues of garment factory workers in India who are predominantly young females between the ages of 21 and 25, most of whom are semi-skilled migrant workers and the sole earning members of their families. Academic, industry, and funding partners worked together to create and coordinate a successful occupational health education model based on careful assessment of local, contextual needs and priorities and a delivery system based on identifying and developing effective peer educators. The project has been completed in two garment factories and a spinning mill, is ongoing in four factories and seven spinning mills, with many more factories interested in taking it up in the future.



Reviewer comment: “This project is extremely relevant where women in large numbers are employed in garment factories. This is an example of university, industry, NGOs partnership aimed at improvement of family health. The project is well-designed and the peer education model is interesting.”

Presenter: Suvetha Kannappan, Associate Professor, Department of Community Medicine, PSG Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Coimbatore, India

The Projects That Work competition is an annual feature of The Network: TUFH annual meeting. The next Network: TUFH meeting will be held in Shenyang, China, July 26-30, 2016. Applications for the 2016 Projects That Work competition will open in January 2016. Monitor the website of The Network: TUFH (<http://www.the-networktufh.org/>) for more information.