

ON TARGETS

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Communicating Research Findings: A Bottom-up Approach

By Shilpa Karvande (MAAS-CHRD)

“Seeta was a thirty-year old widow living with her old parents in a remote village. She would frequently fall ill and her parents would not know how to take care of her. They would spend money every time take her to a local private doctor. They were not convinced about taking her to the government ART centre.....”

...More than one hundred formal health care providers from various sectors had gathered in a govern-

Some of the participants in the meeting had supported the study by helping identify cases, arranging interviews and seeking primary consent from the respondents. The meeting also aimed to generate more awareness among the local formal health providers about their role in supporting families of HIV positive persons. Experts from the health sector – the medical officer in-charge of the district ART Centre, and a state-level training expert were invited to interact with the participants. One of the participants expressed, “The presentations were very clear and good.... now we will be more aware while interacting with these families.”

The research team prepared a brochure containing information about HIV-related services in and around the study area, presented in an easy, visually assisted form. This brochure was a step towards strengthening referral and networking between private, public and NGO sectors at the local level for dealing with HIV positive cases. It had information about the importance of HIV testing, free HIV testing facilities, importance of HIV testing for pregnant women, Tuberculosis, its interaction with HIV and treatment facilities, details on functioning of government run ART centre and support services offered by NGOs for families affected by HIV. The brochure was released during this meeting and copies were distributed to all the participants. The researchers visited all the villages in the study area, and distributed the brochure to the public sector run pre-school workers, representatives of local government bodies in villages and to private practitioners. The research team received feedback from various respondents that

the brochure was “very handy”, “easy to follow” and that some HIV positive persons and their families could use the information to avail HIV services in their vicinity.

Additionally a newspaper article was prepared to communicate the study findings to the general public at the district level. This article provided the life experience of one of



the families written as a short story and then elaborated on various issues of family members.

It ended with a message inviting readers to think about how they could contribute to support such families. A leading local newspaper published this article next to its editorial page. The research team has been receiving phone calls from readers thanking them for creating awareness about the problem and providing information.

The research team is at present trying to meet all the study participants – people living with HIV and their families - on an individual basis to communicate the research findings and explain the brochure to them.

We believe effective communication is vital in ensuring that research makes a difference and that without communication a lot of research is wasted.



HIV-related services brochure

ment hall and were deeply involved in listening to this story. It was a dissemination meeting organized by MAAS-CHRD to communicate findings of their community-based study on “Issues around family care providers of HIV positive persons in rural area” based life experiences of 19 HIV positive persons and their family members. The presentations were made in the local language using visuals and stories.

receives funding from DFID and conducts research to generate effective tools and strategies for communicable disease control

Our Partners:
MAAS-CHRD, Pune, India
Ifakara HRDC, Tanzania

INDEPTH Network, Accra, Ghana
KNCV, The Hague, Netherlands
Makerere Medical College, Uganda
ZAMBART, the Zambian AIDS-related Tuberculosis project,
Lusaka, Zambia
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK



Locating the Power of In-between Conference

By Joseph Banda (ZAMBART)

A two-day conference entitled: **Locating the Power of In-between** was held in Pretoria, South Africa on the 1-2nd July 2008. The conference was organised by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), United Kingdom and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) of South Africa and sponsored by DFID. Around 100 participants from both the developing and developed world attended, including: communications specialists, media practitioners, researchers and development experts. Joseph Banda from ZAMBART was sponsored by DFID to attend the conference.

The starting point for the conference was the recognition that policy is a key driver for action to address many issues surrounding poverty and injustice. In the policy making process, well known actors include policy makers, civil society, development practitioners and researchers. Less well known in this process are research brokers, and intermediaries that act in-between these groups to facilitate information and communication. It was pointed out that policy making processes are complex, not a simple straight line between research and policy. The conference goal therefore was to develop a better understanding of where the intermediaries make a significant contribution to supporting the pro-poor knowledge based policy and practice. The conference sought to raise awareness about the ways and contexts in which the role of intermediaries is being played, share knowledge about this role, and initiate debate to promote further action around this role.

The conference learnt that when politicians use evidence to make decisions, research evidence comes low on the list, on top of that list are the newspapers, talking to people and experts. The need to better understand impediments of why politicians are willing but not able to engage with research evidence was highlighted.

It was also noted that many academics do not take the knowledge further than its generation. The production of peer-reviewed papers in 'acceptable' academic journals was also sighted as a huge limitation in the production of pro-poor evidence informed policy.

The conference discussed how research brokers and intermediaries contribute to evidence based pro poor policy-making, supporting access and promoting uptake on research communications. Conference proceedings and sessions are available on: powerofinbetween.wordpress.com

TB Lab Tecns on Tour

TARGETS is currently funding a South-South exchange of laboratory technicians working in TB research. Initiated by Ruth McNerney who had previously collaborated with diagnostic laboratories in both Lusaka and Kampala it is aiming at enabling the exchange of ideas and promotion of good practice. TB diagnosis is changing, after many years in the wilderness the lab has now been acknowledged to be at the heart of TB control and investment in the laboratory infrastructure is at last becoming a reality rather than a dream. With the new technology comes new challenges and new expectations. Topics for discussion between the two labs has so far included contamination control during TB culture, rapid detection of MDR-TB and methodologies for susceptibility testing for the 2nd line drugs used to treat drug patients with resistant disease. Two staff from the TB lab in the Kampala based Joint Clinical Research Centre (JCRC) have already enjoyed the hospitality of ZAMBART and the Ministry of Health Chest Diseases Laboratory in Lusaka. Following the success of the visit a return leg is planned, such was the value of the initial visit further funding is to be requested from the Zambian MOH to allow an additional member of staff to attend.



The lab team at ZAMBART house.

TARGETS at the ESM

The 29th Congress of the European Society of Mycobacteriology (ESM2008) was held in Plovdiv for 3 days in early July. TARGETS and its collaborators was well represented at the meeting with six lab based staff from Zambia, one from Zimbabwe, one from Kampala and three scientists and a PhD student from LSHTM. It was also an excellent opportunity to catch up with many former collaborators and friends. On the opening evening Ruth McNerney was interviewed by Bulgaria television who wanted to know why TB control is failing in some parts of the world. During the scientific meeting presentations given by members of the Consortium covered topics as varied as TB diagnostics, identification of non tuberculosis mycobacteria, phylogeny and drug resistance. A poster presented by Kim Mallard (LSHTM) describing an evaluation of a new tool for studying molecular epidemiology was selected for commendation by the organizing committee. The ESM is an informal organization that welcomes anyone with an interest in laboratory aspects of controlling TB. More information about the ESM and the abstracts from the meeting can be accessed via www.esmycobacteriology.eu.

Ruth McNerney

TARGETS—PANOS Collaboration

TARGETS recently collaborated with a PANOS initiative on two ventures. A media toolkit was produced on vulnerability and TB and improving TB reporting in the media. The second was a PANOS article written about ZAMBART's work on TB/HIV stigma.

Links for these can be found on the TARGETS website homepage at www.lshtm.ac.uk/dfid/targets/