

Sustained Partnership and Advocacy help Strengthen Projects

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of enhancing global and regional collaboration and effective partnerships among all sectors and stakeholders as emphasised under the Sustainable Development Goal Agenda. It brought to light the existing gaps in the health response systems globally and made the governments realise that working in partnership is an imperative need for health initiatives to succeed in achieving their objectives for the larger community.

SYNERGETIC EFFECT OF ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIP

The dynamic interaction between partnership and advocacy has the potential to work towards creating a public health system, which is systemic, responsive and capable of addressing existing disparities and challenges faced by the vulnerable and the marginalised people in accessing quality health services in India. Engaging with organizations helps in filling the financial, human, and material resource gaps, and contribute towards increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of project/ initiatives. Healthcare advocacy helps in giving voice to people's needs, through methods like awareness campaigns on a particular health issue, influencing policies to ensure better access to healthcare services, or challenging systemic barriers that hinder effective health service delivery.

COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR COMPLEX ISSUES

For World Health Partners (WHP), sustained engagement with partners and advocacy with key stakeholders have been helpful in implementing its projects and successfully achieving the desired targets. Government being an important stakeholder, its support is crucial in running and strengthening public health programmes. WHP has signed several memorandum of understanding (MOUs) with state government departments, district authorities and public health institutions, which have been helpful in seeking active government support in obtaining administrative approvals, involving staff participation in training on public health issues, and scaling up of successful WHP interventions on various health subjects. WHP has been working on a range of issues such as Tuberculosis elimination, addressing issues of mental health, gender-based violence (GBV), substance use, promoting family planning and strengthening primary health care systems.

Collaborations are worked out depending on the project need. The COVID project that aimed at addressing rising mental health cases required technical expertise for which WHP engaged with reputed institutions such as Institute of Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS), Central Institute of Psychiatry (CIP), Ranchi Institute of Neuro-Psychiatry and Allied Sciences (RINPAS), Hospital of Mental Health Ahmedabad (HMHA), and District Mental Health Program in the intervention states and even networked with private medical practitioners to fulfil the counselling and referral needs of patients. To provide a comprehensive support to women affected by GBV, WHP signed a MoU with Shakti Shalini, a Delhi based organization for legal support counselling referral support services. WHP partnered with Sangath for training its counselors on basic psychosocial care and psychoeducation to engage with COVID affected individuals and families.

For reaching the marginalised population groups, WHP partnered with CINI, a Jharkhand-based NGO with local presence, especially among the tribal population. Partners like Centre for Equity Studies, Health and Agricultural Society and Srijan Foundation were crucial in reaching the homeless, transgender population, and sex-workers during the project intervention.

WHP is also conducting supportive supervision of various government health facilities including Health and Wellness Centre (HWCs) and share its observations with the concerned departments to facilitate corrective actions.



Partnership and advocacy has helped in engagement with public health authorities at the highest level, and spreading awareness on public health issues. **Left:** Ms. Remya Mohan, Mission Director-National Health Mission, Government of Gujarat, addressing participants at the state-level symposium on mental health held in Ahmedabad; **Right:** An article on community Health Officer's training by WHP published in a local newspaper in Jharkhand.

World Health Partners (WHP) is a non-profit Indian society that sets up programs to bring sustainable healthcare within easy access to underserved and vulnerable communities. It innovatively harnesses already available resources more efficiently by using evidence-based management and technological solutions. WHP is best known for its programs focused on early detection and treatment of tuberculosis in urban and rural settings supported by community-based activities to ensure prevention. The organization uses all available resources--both in the public and private sectors to ensure that people living in any part of the country will have access to high-quality treatment.

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