

AMRO regional workshop on Advocacy, Communication and Social Mobilization Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 31 may - 2 June 2005

The event was the second in a series of planned workshops which the Stop TB Partnership Secretariat (TBP) is organizing during 2005 in cooperation with WHO Regional Offices to promote the uptake of strategic ACSM activities by National TB Programmes and mainstream ACSM into the technical assistance package for TB. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Silvio Waisbord of the Academy for Educational Development (AED) and attended by 30+ participants from 13 countries of Central/South America and the Caribbean (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru), plus staff from AMRO/Washington and Stop TB/Geneva. The specific objectives were to:

- Assess the ACSM activities currently being undertaken by NTPs in the region;
- Assess the main challenges facing NTPs in the area of ACSM and how it can contribute to meeting TB control targets;
- Reach agreement among participants on ACSM terms and principles, and improve their ability to plan and implement activities;
- Identify the main technical assistance needs of NTPs and countries;
- Review the ACSM section of AMRO's Strategic Plan for 2005-2015.

Dr. Waisbord made a plenary presentation on a "Cough to Cure" pathway he developed on secondment with TBP in late 2004 as a guide for identifying obstacles to TB diagnosis and treatment and planning appropriate communication interventions. That was followed by presentations and discussion of ACSM activities in four AMRO countries: Bolivia, Argentina, Mexico and Peru. Perhaps the most striking aspect of these presentations, as also reflected in the pre-workshop questionnaire, is that while there is a fairly high level of ACSM activity in the AMRO region, none of the countries are using a strategic approach to planning and none have any monitoring and evaluation component to speak of.

Participants then broke into groups and for the next day and a half, worked to formulate ACSM strategic plans in response to hypothetical case studies using an 8-part model: 1) baseline studies, 2) definition of objectives, 3) selection of strategies, 4) identification of benefits and obstacles, 5) selection of communication channels, 6) design and testing of messages and materials, 6) monitoring and evaluation, 7) budgeting, and 8) project management. Presentations were made by the groups for discussion after each portion of the model was completed.

On the final day of the workshop, participants discussed and identified the ACSM main needs of their NTPs/countries in terms of human and financial resources, and technical assistance. The Regional Adviser, Dr. Mirtha Del Granado, made a final presentation on the ACSM component of AMRO's strategic plan for 2005-2015, and the group discussed and agreed upon suggested next steps to the workshop.

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