
Civil Society Engagement

IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOR HEALTH

WHY ENGAGE
CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANISATIONS IN
RESEARCH FOR HEALTH
AND INNOVATION?

The COHRED Group



Supporting research and innovation systems for health, equity and development

WHY ENGAGE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN RESEARCH FOR HEALTH AND INNOVATION?

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) undertake important research and bring innovative approaches to development. Health-oriented CSOs tend to work across sectors and often have a holistic approach to health and development through which they not only address health issues, but also many of the health determinants. Through their direct contact with communities and also because of their independence from governments and other powerful entities, some of these CSOs have been able to find solutions to local problems. We believe CSOs should be more

involved in research and innovation for health so as to help ensure its local relevance and better use.

The COHRED Group (Council on Health Research for Development) defines CSOs as organisations that are not-for-profit, operate between the state and the public, and between the state and the market. These organisations represent, or serve, groups of people that are guided by a passion to contribute to social change, influence health policies, and improve health outcomes through research, science and innovation.

SHAPING THE RESEARCH AGENDA

The COHRED Group believes that communities know what their needs are and that CSOs are often in a good position to address these needs, as these examples demonstrate:

SEARCH researched neonatal mortality in rural communities of India, then engaged women community health workers to deliver culturally-sensitive life-saving interventions for newborn babies. Infant mortality was reduced by 62% in a very short time. Based on the research of SEARCH and on similar community-level research, the World Health Organisation (WHO) created a resolution titled: “Train millions of

community health workers to diagnose and treat pneumonia in children, ensure antibiotic supply and educate mothers about pneumonia”

www.searchgadchiroli.org

PROCOSI conducted research on knowledge, attitudes and practices of sexual reproductive health on two indigenous populations of Bolivia. It is on the basis of this research that local women’s community organisations were then empowered to train women of a sexual reproductive age on sexual reproductive health. Maternal mortality was reduced by 75%. In 2008, the project received the Pan-American

Health Organisation (PAHO) award for 'Best Practices in Gender, Ethnicity and Health'.

new.paho.org

BRAC experimented and researched the provision of health treatment for rural villages - that lacked access to

government health care - in Bangladesh. Based on this work, BRAC now provides basic health care services to the most marginalised populations. For people diagnosed with mild and severe morbidity BRAC provides financial assistance for their clinical care.

www.brac.net

PRODUCTS and SERVICES TO SHOWCASE AND STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF CSOs IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOR HEALTH

On-Line platform – CSO.HEALTHRESEARCHWEB.ORG

To create an opportunity to showcase their work, network with colleagues around the world, demonstrate best practices, share stories, tools and resources, and engage with peers in discussion topics of common concern, The COHRED Group developed an online space dedicated to CSOs.



REGISTER YOUR ORGANISATION FREE AT CSO.HEALTHRESEARCHWEB.ORG AND JOIN THE NETWORK OF CSOs ALREADY LISTED.

Tools

CSOs, governments, research institutions and other actors will find COHRED's action guide invaluable in helping to critically reflect on how best to build on the capacity of CSOs in strengthening research and innovation for health at the country-level.

Download the action guide from:

www.cohred.org/framework-guides-system-strengthening

Technical support

The COHRED Group works with countries in strengthening their research and innovation systems for health. Emphasis can be given to ensuring the appropriate involvement of CSOs in research system strengthening activities, for example in the research agenda process.

The COHRED Group sees:

- **Research** as the generation of new knowledge;
- **Innovation** as the process from the generation of a new idea to its transformation into practical applications (useful services, products, diagnostic tools, drugs, methods, management practices and policies), and to their implementation via public procurement and distribution;
- **Social Innovation** as the process that involves the elaboration of more effective ways to organise people and information in health systems;
- **Invention** as the creation of a new idea;
- **Development** as the process of scaling up innovations;
- **Not-for-profit** or non-profit organisations do not distribute surplus funds to owners or shareholders, but instead use them to help pursue their goals and reinvest them in social good.

The COHRED Group and its CSO-oriented work:

In establishing linkages and partnerships with CSOs, the COHRED Group provides support, technical expertise and tools to low and middle-income countries to help them strengthen their involvement in research and innovation systems for health.

To be part of this initiative please contact:

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Or visit

cso.healthresearchweb.org

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