



Civil Society Engagement in Research for Health

This page will soon include features for group interaction and sharing of information

How can Civil Society Organisations become active partners in research for health?

Civil Society Engagement in Research for Health is an initiative of a group of organisations who are active in various aspects of research for health. There has been much discussion of the 'involvement of communities' in research to improve population health. In the past, this has typically meant the participation of communities as subjects in research projects. The partners in this initiative aim to turn the question around, and ask:

- How can civil society organisations (CSOs) influence priorities and investments in research on critical health issues for a country?
- How can people, with the help of civil society organisations, be more engaged in research that improves population health?
- How can research institutions, governments and funders support civil society organisations in playing a meaningful role in research for health?

The partners come from different backgrounds and countries. Our common goals are to:

- Better understand how research for health can be improved by participation of people and communities, especially in low and middle income countries.
- Advocate for engagement of civil society organisations in research for health.
- Share experiences among all actors interested in making civil society organisations an essential partner in research for health.

What is a 'CSO'?

We define civil society organisations as: *Organisations that are not-for-profit, operate between the state and the public, represent or serve population groups, and are guided by the principle of social justice.* Our focus is on organisations with an interest in research for health, and in using research to assess health determinants, influence health policies and improve health outcomes. We believe that civil society organisations represent and build alliances with community-based organisations and community groupings; and appreciate the diversity of these kinds of organisations and the challenges of having an organisation 'represent' specific groups in society. We acknowledge that their contribution to research for health has a positive impact on the population at large.

Why CSO Engagement?

Why Civil Society Engagement in Research for Health? Civil society organisations:

- Drive, participate in and conduct research that embraces health in its broadest sense,



including the determinants of health and health-related inequities.

- Can hold all stakeholders accountable for the commitments they make towards research for health.
- Can increase the skills and capacity of local actors, enabling them to respond effectively to national and international priorities and demands.
- Provide missing viewpoints and cultural perspectives to research for health.
- Translate research for health into action for health.
- Disseminate research findings to a wide audience of stakeholders in health using more accessible and most appropriate formats such as stories and narratives.

Join us

Make your voice heard in the emerging discussion and debate on civil society

organisations' engagement in research for health. Are you a member of a civil society organisation? And interested in joining a community of like-minded professionals who are active in making research for health more relevant to people's needs? If so you can benefit from being a member of this new community. This is probably the first group of its kind dedicated to shaping new thinking and sharing experiences on civil society organisations between countries on this topic. As a member you can share your profile with like-minded organisations; give input to discussions and projects. All participants are welcome: as active community members or observers.

Toward Research for Health

The paradigm shift from health research to research for health was embraced during the Global Ministerial Forum on Research for Health (Bamako, November 2008). Research for health takes a broader view than health research. It includes sectors beyond health (such as agriculture, housing and environment) that have a direct impact on the health of populations. To ensure an effective move towards research for health, the involvement of stakeholders from various sectors and disciplines – including civil society organisations – is needed.

Call to Action

Call to Action for Civil Society Engagement in Research for Health The partners of this initiative developed a [Call](#) for Civil Society Engagement in Research for Health, during a consultative meeting in October 2008. This document presents key strategies and recommendations to strengthen the role of civil society organisations in research for health, and for helping achieve better health for all through research. The Call was presented at the Bamako Ministerial Forum on Research for Health (www.Bamako2008.org), and was one of the three main outputs from the Conference. [You can contribute to the Call by endorsing or commenting on it.](#)

Partners

This website and initiative is supported by the following organisations:

- [ANIS, Instituto de Bioética, Direitos Humanos e Gênero, Brazil](#)



- [Centre for Public Health and Equity, SOCHARA, India](#)
- [Centre for Science and Environment \(CSE\), India](#)
- [CIAM - Public Health Research and Development Centre, The Gambia](#)
- [Community Health Sciences, Aga Khan University, Pakistan](#)
- [Council on Health Research for Development \(COHRED\), Switzerland](#)
- [DBL - Centre for Health Research and Development, Denmark](#)
- [International Centre for Reproductive Health \(ICRHK\), Kenya](#)
- [L'Association Tunisienne de Promotion de la Recherche en Santé \(ATUPRES\), Tunisia](#)
- Project Africa, Kenya
- [Research!America, USA](#)
- [Wellcome Trust, UK](#)

[We invite all organisations interested in civil society engagement in research for health to participate in this initiative](#)