



International Policy Brief

Issue 4, September 2009

Happy Anniversary to The Movement for Global Mental Health!

In this issue of the BasicNeeds Policy Brief, we celebrate the second anniversary of the Movement for Global Mental Health, which just convened representatives from a range of its 57 partner organisations at a summit in Athens. The Movement aims to improve services for people with mental disorders worldwide according to two fundamental principles: scientific evidence and human rights. In keeping with the goals of the Movement, we will report on how BasicNeeds has contributed since our last brief to improvement of services, scientific evidence and human rights. We encourage all of you reading this brief to join the Movement for Global Mental Health today... www.globalmentalhealth.org.

1. Improving Mental Health Services

A new programme in Nepal – With new funding from DFID, BasicNeeds has begun implementing the Model for Mental Health and Development in Nepal in partnership with the Community Based Rehabilitation Service (CBRS). Staff have been trained and over 100 people with mental illness or epilepsy identified in the first months of operation.

Much needed training for epilepsy in Ghana – An expert cross-cultural collaboration was arranged by our team in Ghana with the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE), Ghana Health Services and the Epilepsy Society of Ghana. A faculty of 12 neurologists and associated health professionals, half from the ILAE and half from Ghana, led two training programmes, one in Northern Ghana for nurses and medical assistants and one in Accra for physicians, enthusiastically attended by 80 participants.

A regional hub for mental health in Uganda – Following their first African conference in Kampala in February, the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry jointly organised a conference with the US Institute of Medicine on *Quality of Care Issues for Mental Health and Neurological Disorders in Sub-Saharan Africa* at which BasicNeeds participated and presented its work.

In Memoriam, Dr. Hauli, Tanzania – BasicNeeds mourns the loss of Dr. Johnson Hauli, a highly-respected psychiatrist and colleague in Tanzania who died in August after decades of service in the public sector. Dr. Hauli was among the first three locally educated psychiatrists in Tanzania and formerly acted as the country's Chief Psychiatrist. As one of only 8 psychiatrists working in the public sector in Tanzania, serving a population of 40 million, Dr. Hauli will be sorely missed.

2. Building Scientific Evidence

Generating evidence from India – The BasicNeeds Knowledge Programme, directed from Bangalore, has been highly active over the last few months, finalising data collection for the annual thematic research study, which this year focuses on financing of mental health care.

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Hot off the press – In parallel with generating data, our programmes have been working hard to publish our findings. We welcome three significant new publications :

- *An Introduction to Mental Health: Facilitator's Manual for Training Community Health Workers in India*, produced in collaboration with the Nossal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne.
<http://www.basicneeds.org/html/newsstory.asp?newsstory=99>
- For this year's collection of life stories of individuals in our programme, have a look at the latest *We Count* review, focusing on sustainable livelihoods.
www.basicneeds.org/download/We%20Count%20-%20Issue%207.pdf
- More on our growing evidence-base can be found in the new section of our website dedicated to peer-reviewed publications:
www.basicneeds.org/html/What_Research_Publications.htm

Learning and teaching – To ensure that knowledge becomes practice, our programmes have been learning and disseminating the latest evidence through conferences and workshops, for example:

- **Sri Lanka** - *Improving the Mental Health Status of Communities Affected by War*, organized in Colombo by BasicNeeds with a keynote address from the Minister for Housing; *Taking Care of the Mental Well-Being of Children in War Affected Areas*, organized in Vaharai by BasicNeeds to launch a new publication with the same title.
- **Lao PDR** – participation in a conference on *The Social Welfare of Child and Woman* organised by UNICEF; lecture to medical students on *Psychological Considerations of Learning Disabilities and the Dying Patient* at the University of Health Sciences.
- **Europe** – Cittadinanza and WHO conference *Strengthening Mental Health Systems in Low and Middle-Income Countries* in Rimini, Italy; the World Psychiatric Association conference *Treatments in Psychiatry: A New Update* in Florence; a *Mental Health Policy Round-Table*, held at the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health in London; and the ILAE centenary conference in Budapest.

3. Advocating for Human Rights

Educating about rights in Kenya – Despite wide-spread power cuts that have been grinding businesses to a halt throughout Kenya, our programme has continued to work at full-mast. With funding from the European Commission, BasicNeeds has been raising awareness about human rights documents, such as the Disability Convention. Notably, we participated in a conference in Nairobi organized by the Health NGOs Network (HENNET) on *Civil Society Utilization of Human Rights Approaches in Health Programming*.

Building a national user movement in Ghana – BasicNeeds has been facilitating self-help groups of people with mental illness or epilepsy in Ghana to form a unified national movement. As of last count, 239 self-help groups across Northern Ghana and Accra, including 35 district-level groups, have representation in a newly formed national user association, the Mental Health Society of Ghana.

Reducing inequalities for aborigines in Australia – BasicNeeds has been providing consultancy to the Aboriginal Mental Health Worker Program run by General Practice Network Northern Territories (GPNNT). Mental health workers are located within primary health care teams at community clinics and they liaise with community service groups to provide a holistic response to the complex needs of indigenous people.

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