



Building knowledge – This month, we launch a new publications page on our website, the fruits of our Knowledge Programme, which is now in its fourth year. Have a look at some of the thirty reports relating to mental health and development. Among them are baseline studies about the mental health situation in countries where we work, outcome evaluations and impact reports examining the results of our work (including economic results), research studies relating to policy, practice and participatory data analysis, and several practical manuals, of which a handbook describing our Model for **Mental Health and Development**. We draw your attention in particular to our feature research publication **Community Mental Health Practice- Seven Essential Features for Scaling Up in Low- and Middle-Income Countries**, which defines what we mean by community mental health and how it is practiced by us and our partners.

Responding to emergencies – In this time of global mourning for the quake victims in Haiti, we balance our desire to respond immediately with our commitment to work sustainably. Our policy is to do emergency field work only in contexts where we were involved prior to the emergency. Such was the case in Sri Lanka, where BasicNeeds responded to the tsunami instantly providing community-based psycho-social support to thousands of displaced people thanks in part to an immense cadre of community volunteers. Following that experience, we **developed a model for mental health training in emergencies**, which is described in one of our newest publications, *Training for Impact*, written by Steve Fisher with a preface by Dr. Neil Fernando of Sri Lanka's National Institute of Mental Health.

Turning 10 in 2010 – We are happy to announce our 10th year delivering services in mental health and development! At this point in 2000, Chris Underhill, DM Naidu and Sony George were setting the ground for what was to become the Model for Mental Health and Development, the cornerstone of BasicNeeds' work. Many people doubted there would be sufficient demand for mental health. Ten years later, the demand surging from over 460 self-help groups and thousands of individuals in our programme is forcing practical improvements in service provision. Let us know if you would

like to contribute to our 10th anniversary celebrations, which will be taking place throughout the year on both small and large scale.

Farewell Benedetto – All of us at BasicNeeds join in wishing a hearty farewell to Benedetto Saraceno, who is retiring from the WHO, where he has adeptly directed the department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse for the past 11 years, overseeing 23 staff in Geneva and 25 overseas. Under his tenure, the WHO has produced a number of seminal publications, including the World Health Report 2001: *Mental Health, New Understanding New Hope*, and the ATLAS and AIMS reports on mental health resources, as well as the recent first of its kind *Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP)*, outlining priority conditions and interventions for mental health. Benedetto has led the field with verve and a continual call to do better, starting with ourselves. His leadership and spirit will be much missed.

Service Users Take the Podium

Bangalore was the site of an historic symposium in November bringing together heads of national user movements in Kenya, Tanzania, Nepal, India and the Netherlands. The symposium on the role of consumers in mental health care was organised by our friends Angelo Barbato and Martine Vallarino of the Mario Negri Institute on behalf of the Global Forum for Community Mental Health as part of a conference of the World Association for Psychiatric Rehabilitation. Our partners Susan Keter of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry Kenya, and Eliezer Mdakilwa of Tanzania Users and Survivors of Psychiatry spoke powerfully of their experiences and the plans of their respective organisations to tackle service gaps and stigma.

Country Highlights

Ghana pioneers a new mental health journal – Our warm congratulations to Professor Mate-Kole, Editor in Chief, and Professor Danquah, Founder of the new *Ghana International Journal of Mental Health*, launched on January

28 in Accra. We also salute our colleagues at BasicNeeds Ghana, Peter Yaro, Truelove Antwi Bekoe and Evans Oheneba-Mensah whose paper “Psychotropic medicine shortages in Ghana: a situation analysis” appears in the first issue of the journal. Stay tuned to our external publications website, where the article will soon be posted.

Kenya and disability – For the first time since its establishment in 2004, Kenya’s National Council for Persons with Disability (NCPD) has explicitly included mental illness and epilepsy within its definition of disability. The NCPD was formed to enact Kenya’s Disability Bill and is currently rolling out a welfare programme. BasicNeeds and our affiliated user groups have collaborated closely with the Disability Council to achieve this important step.

Uganda trains counselors – BasicNeeds Programme Manager Tina Ntulo participated in a programme organized by the Uganda Counselling Association to train 135 counsellors and provide pro-bono counseling to 7,463 clients. Some of the issues discussed include sexual and marital problems, career, stress management and substance abuse – topics relating to mental health promotion and illness prevention.

Tanzania lobbies for better drug supply – BasicNeeds Tanzania staff, under the leadership of Malembo Makene, held a series of meetings with 51 representatives of Council Health Management Teams in Mtwara district so as to review their local mental health services. Particular emphasis was placed on the shortage of psychotropic drugs, and the issue has been promoted for discussion by the full Council for action.

Sri Lanka focuses on children – We are pleased to report that the European Commission recently approved a new two year project for BasicNeeds to work with vulnerable children in post-conflict areas of the country. The work will be carried out by our partners ESCOO, Navajeevana and Akasa and tackles a much neglected area of child mental health.

Lao participates in an Asia Pacific regional network – Chantharavady our Programme Manager and one of two public sector psychiatrists in Lao PDR was invited to participate in a workshop in Bangkok hosted by the Critical Incident Stress Management Unit of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security. The event, whose purpose was to strengthen the network of mental health professionals in Asia Pacific, was attended by participants from India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Timor Leste, Philippines, Thailand and Lao PDR.

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For more information, or to remove yourself from this list, please contact Victoria de Menil