The Power of International Cooperation to tackle Noncommunicable Diseases

Visit the photo exhibit in the WHO library to learn more about how international cooperation is leveraged for the prevention and control of NCDs in three regions

In 2015 the WHO Global Coordination Mechanism on NCDs (WHO GCM/NCD) commissioned a photography exhibition to convey the enormous economic and social burden noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) represent for developing countries.

In the context of the WHO GCM/NCD Dialogue Meeting on Mobilizing International Cooperation on NCDs this exhibition and accompanying video drew participants’ attention to the disproportionately small scale of resources devoted to NCD prevention and control given the vicious cycle whereby NCDs and their risk factors worsen poverty, while poverty contribute to rising rates of NCDs. The stories these photographs document are drawn from across three of the WHO regions and demonstrate the diversity of possible tools and resources available to tackle NCDs. Please find brief outlines of each below:

Ministries of Health throughout the Caribbean have committed to improve cervical cancer prevention and control. The Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) is an NCD alliance that works with national governments and cancer societies throughout the region. In Belize and Jamaica, where the Ministries of Health provide cervical cancer screening in primary care centres, the HCC initiated projects with local NGOs on cervical cancer prevention amongst vulnerable, disadvantaged women. These initiatives were initially financed by the American Cancer Society Meet the Targets Grant and an Australian Direct Aid Programme. But following their success they have also received funding from UNESCO. This strengthened the capacity of civil society organizations in both countries, thereby extending the reach of public health services and improving access for the earlier detection of cervical cancer.
To address its obligations under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), the Philippines passed its landmark Sin Tax Law in 2012. The tax tackles NCDs on multiple fronts: first by raising prices leading to reduced tobacco consumption, and second by providing a source of sustainable financing for the country’s healthcare system. The revenues generated from the tax are earmarked by the Government of Philippines for primary healthcare and community services, thereby increasing the quality of and access to public healthcare facilities for families.

With the support of the Ugandan Ministry of Health, the partnership between the Uganda NCD Alliance (UNCDA) and Danish NCD Alliance (DNCDA) tackles weak civil society engagement on NCDs. DNCDA provides funding and technical expertise for the capacity development of UNCDA. The Danish Government (DANIDA) finances this twinning programme through a civil society fund. Further support is provided by the Ugandan Parliamentary Forum, WHO Uganda, as well as stakeholders from government and other NGOs. Through this partnership patients are represented and provided with better access to care.

Visit the WHO GCM/NCD’s website (http://www.who.int/ncds/gcm/en/) for information about its work to facilitate and enhance the coordination of activities, multistakeholder engagement and action across sectors at the local, regional and global levels, in order to contribute to the implementation of the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020.

The photographs in this series were documented by the collective of photographers ‘Photographers for Hope’. Photographers for Hope uses the power of images to support positive social change. Its members use a passion for photography and film to tell stories that will inspire action, create change and foster a stronger global community.

The exhibition can now be viewed in the WHO library.