

Building partnerships for structural change: Simavi partnership cases

Simavi is an international non-profit organisation working towards a world in which basic health is accessible to all. Our goal is to structurally improve the basic health of 10 million people in marginalised communities in Africa and Asia by 2020. By doing so, we enable them to build a better existence and break the cycle of poverty. Our experience over the past ninety years has shown us that investing in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is vital for people to be able to lead a healthy life. Therefore we concentrate our efforts in these two areas.

Simavi's Theory of Change

All our programmes are based on three integrated pillars: 1) Empower communities to demand quality services and to practice healthy behaviour; 2) Create a supportive, enabling environment in which all stakeholders are aware of their roles and responsibilities, work together and can be held accountable; 3) Ensure that people use affordable, suitable and sustainable WASH and SRHR services. This is the core of our Theory of Change – it's designed to ensure that everyone involved, from community to governmental level, works together towards realising sustainable improvement of basic health.

Partnership development

Simavi believes that working in sustainable partnerships with different stakeholders is essential to achieve structural change. In addition to successfully managing and participating in strategic alliances, we are involved in several partnerships with the private sector and governments, in which each partner brings their specific expertise and networks. This factsheet highlights some of these partnerships, demonstrating some of the ways we work with others to improve SRHR.

Healthy Business, Healthy Lives Uganda

In the Kibaale district in Uganda many people lack access to good quality medication. Adequate services and information on both sexual reproductive health and communicable diseases are often not available. Furthermore, prices of commodities and services fluctuate, quality is low and supplies are unreliable and inadequate. To address this problem and improve services in this region Simavi, Healthy Entrepreneurs and Emesco have joined forces in the project Healthy Business, Healthy Lives. Healthy Business, Healthy Lives is an innovative project that sustainably improves access to information, contraceptives and affordable medication to combat poverty related diseases.



Objectives

Healthy Business, Healthy Lives follows a logical set of activities to realise a continuous supply of contraceptives, essential medicines and improved access to information on SRHR and poverty related diseases. The consortium will establish a business model for a sustainable medicine and health products supply-chain. A selection of 50 local community health workers and 50 accredited drug shop owners will be trained as entrepreneurs to conduct outreach health promotion and offer a wide range of reliable and affordable quality health commodities at village level. Using an innovative e-health application the entrepreneurs will provide interactive health information on various topics including contraceptives, HIV/AIDS, safe motherhood, sexuality and malaria.

This business model will improve the supply of essential medicines and health products and SRHR knowledge in Bugangaizi East, Buyanja, Buyaga East and Buyaga West in the Kibaale District. At least 150,000 people will benefit from increased access to sexual and reproductive health information and receive better services and referral.

Funding source

Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and contribution by project partners

Simavi's role

As the lead agency, Simavi brings extensive expertise in SRHR, behavioural change communication, demand creation and PME to provide effective programme management, ensuring quality progress of the project plan. In addition, Simavi's network and expertise will be used to attract other interested public or private partners to adapt and replicate this business case elsewhere.

Additional partners

Healthy Entrepreneurs is a Dutch social business experienced in cost-effective medicine distribution and demand creation approaches involving local franchise entrepreneurs.

Emesco Development Foundation is a pro-poor community development organisation with an in-depth understanding of the local context, health system and close relationship with key development and business stakeholders in the district. They will use their networks and knowledge to recruit, train and supervise the entrepreneurs and run the central medicine warehouse.

The Kibaale District Health Office is committed to increase health access in the district and will ensure that the project is aligned with government policies, strategies, protocols and clearance.

Bliss4Midwives Ghana

Maternal and neonatal mortality in rural parts of northern Ghana are higher than in many other parts of Ghana; the quality of antenatal clinics provision is low due to lack of equipment to perform essential tests and hard-to-reach health facilities. Pregnant women commonly fail to follow-up referrals for testing because clinics or hospitals are far away. To improve the reproductive health in this area Simavi, Cordaid and TNO have joined forces in the Bliss4Midwives project. Bliss4Midwives is an innovative project that sustainably increase the quality of and access to antenatal care close to communities.



foto: Geert Snoeijer

Objectives

The Bliss4Midwives project develops an innovative integrated diagnostic device to contribute to the reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality in Ghana. Accurate testing of women during their pregnancy on blood pressure, anemia (spHb) and urine strip test will facilitate timely and effective treatment of (pre)eclampsia.

Bliss4Midwives integrates multiple relevant diagnostic tests in one easy-to-use device. The device is fitted with a (tablet) screen and software that provide user instructions and decision support (to evaluate if referral to hospital is needed). This allows midwives and health workers in rural and remote areas to run tests and interpret results, reaching women who otherwise couldn't, or wouldn't, travel to a far away clinic.

Both Cordaid and Simavi will each work with a local partner and train 20 midwives in 10 different antenatal clinics in the use of the

device. The prototype will be used to monitor 500 pregnant women and their babies in northern Ghana.

The consortium will analyse the usability of the instrument, accuracy of findings and how it contributes to improved antenatal care services. In addition, they will investigate the development of a business model to secure future availability and affordability of Bliss4Midwives devices for the users.

Funding source

Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO)

Simavi's role

Simavi brings extensive experience on the local context, in maternal health and child birth. As a project partner, Simavi will provide technical assistance, e.g. in development of the diagnosis & treatment decision support toolkit and referral, and training of the midwives on the new device.

Additional partners

Cordaid is the lead applicant, and provides technical assistance and project management.

TNO, as the Netherlands' main knowledge institute, brings their expertise in scientific research and innovation design to develop a prototype of the integrated testing device along with a digital decision-support application.

Enviu is responsible for the development of the business case.

The District Health Office will be closely consulted throughout the pilot study to ensure Ghanaian policies and regulations are met.

Northern Presbyterian Health Service (NPHS), Simavi's local partner, is a renowned health service provider and is responsible for the local guidance of the midwives.

Relitech will develop the integration of the different test and application in one user-friendly device.

