

The role of community advocacy to mobilize political support in TB R&D in Spain

Issues: Tuberculosis is the leading cause of death among people living with HIV/Aids worldwide. Comprehensive response is needed to decrease the burden of TB-HIV. We don't have adequate health tools to face the TB pandemic globally: more effective tools are needed. Research and Development (R&D) is essential part of international cooperation policies.

Description: An advocacy strategy was implemented to include TB R&D in the agenda of key stakeholders in order to achieve political and economical support from the Spanish Government (SG). Key audiences identified: HIV/AIDS, Development NGOs and networks; SG Members (health and cooperation); Congress and Senate; Media; Researchers.

First stage: First stage: Raise awareness through direct contacts with key leaders. Meetings with 40 stakeholders; seminar on TB R&D; toolkits for politicians and media; official hearings in Parliament; wide dissemination of information tools.

Second stage: Second stage: Activities to show support to TB R&D by key leaders. A Non Binding Proposal registered into the Congress; "Call For Action" signed by 26 NGOs; second seminar on TB held with the participation of SG Senior Policy-Makers and a proposal for funding TB R&D submitted to SG.

Lessons learned: Lessons learned: A detailed plan of actions is needed to mobilize wide, active support leading to political and financial support. Carefully selection of key audiences and the kind of relationship to establish is essential. Advocacy efforts need a strategic framework where to incorporate the target (e.g. public good for global health). Active networking is crucial. Advocacy and lobbying shouldn't be implemented in isolation and require a hard work of collaboration with NGO's and opinion leaders.

Next steps: SG has declared its will to explore ways to support and fund TB R&D. Next target is obtaining its formal commitment in 2010. To achieve that, awareness activities on TB R&D among Spanish stakeholders aiming at reaching broad community and political support need to be reinforced.

Authors:

L. Ruiz Mingote¹, G. Boichat Sancho², I. Benlloch Velar³, J. Tallada Martínez⁴

Institute(s):

¹Planeta Salud, Institutional Development, Barcelona, Spain, ²Planeta Salud, Advocacy Officer, Barcelona, Spain, ³Planeta Salud, Communication Officer, Barcelona, Spain, ⁴Consultant in Global Health, Barcelona, Spain