

ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS

THE SEARCH FOR SOCIAL INNOVATIONS THAT IMPROVED PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE DELIVERY OF EQUITABLE HEALTH SERVICES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

We are very pleased to announce the results of the 2021 Call for Social Innovations for Health in LAC. The call was hosted by the Secretariat in Latin America and the Caribbean (SIHI-LAC), comprised of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Centro Internacional de Entrenamiento e Investigaciones Médicas (CIDEIM) and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (UNAH).

128 
applications

17 
countries

106 
eligible applications

All project applications underwent an extensive assessment process supported by an independent panel of expert reviewers. The top-16 projects were invited for interviews with the review panel members.

We are very excited to announce the 4 winning social innovation projects, as well as 4 projects which are receiving an honorary mention.

OUR WINNERS

There are 4 winning initiatives from different regions across LAC.

FROM MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA



MITIGATING SOCIOCULTURAL BARRIERS AND COVID-19 RISK WHEN TESTING A COMMUNITY SURVEILLANCE AND RESPONSE SYSTEM WITHIN AN INCLUSIVE HEALTHCARE MODEL

CHALLENGE: Addressing barriers (availability, accessibility, affordability, adequacy and acceptability) that limit access to care.

SOLUTION: Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the complete closure of the country, a mobile call centre was created for the rural municipality of Lake Atitlan, for the exclusive use of the local indigenous population (Maya Tzotujil). The call centre has a dual purpose: first, community members can use the centre to ask questions and obtain information about COVID-19 and, second, the information provided by the community is recorded in a system and sent to local authorities to assist in the monitoring and evaluation of COVID-19 cases. To support ongoing research activities, young people from the community are trained as researchers.

FROM THE ANDEAN

THE SONG OF THE TUCAN: RADIO, HEALTH AND PEDAGOGY IN THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON



Colombia

CHALLENGE: Amazonian communities do not have access to reliable health information, especially during the pandemic. In the area, internet connectivity is limited and generally, radio use is more common and has more widespread coverage.

SOLUTION: A knowledge exchange program using radio as the means of communication. Initially, the program was developed as an extension of a course at the National University of Colombia, headquartered in the Amazon. However, the program has developed in collaboration with different indigenous organizations like OPIAC, ACITAM, ATICOYA, AZCAITA, CAPIUL, TIWA, CIHTACOYD, among others. Through this program, local leaders and health agents can directly communicate all pertinent health information to their communities. The information includes recommendations for prevention, diagnosis and vaccination against COVID-19 and other topics such as mental health and gender-based violence. The program has been so successful that it has been extended to 3 other departments in the Amazon (Vaupés, Putumayo and Caquetá) and contains key messages in more than 10 indigenous languages.

FROM SOUTH AMERICA

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19



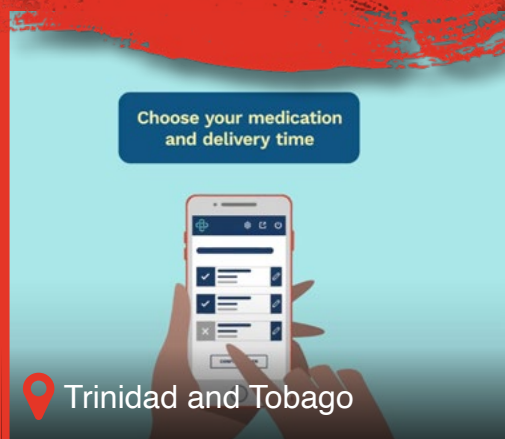
Brazil

CHALLENGE: Populations in a situation of vulnerability and lacking access to reliable information, during COVID-19.

SOLUTION: A communication campaign to reach vulnerable populations in the municipality of Sorocaba, in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. The project fostered community trust through the participation of community leaders, working with them and turning them into carriers of the message and key players in the initiative. These leaders are part of short videos disseminated through social networks (WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter), which informed about the latest health standards and prevention measures of COVID-19. In addition, these messages were reinforced through the implementation of a "Covidometro", informative posters with the latest local statistics on COVID-19 and by disseminating health norms through megaphones.

FROM THE CARIBBEAN

MEDL



Trinidad and Tobago

CHALLENGE: Non-compliance and poor adherence to treatments for non-communicable diseases. In COVID-19, the need to promote adherence and safety protocols with affected patients became more critical.

SOLUTION: A technology platform to help patients manage their medication (reminders to take medication, automatic prescription refills), save time and cost (offers lower price and generic alternatives) and improve accessibility (online ordering and delivery). It also gave health care providers access to online medical records, a medication database, and the ability to send patient communications (reminders to refill script, monitoring patient behaviour and medication usage). Currently, an assessment is being made to determine the viability of scaling the innovation to the local public sector and to other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

HONORARY MENTIONS

There are 4 projects with honorary mention.

LET'S HEAL EQUALLY

 Mexico

CHALLENGE: Limited access and affordability to quality public health services and increased out-of-pocket spending for health services (from 45% to more than 70%) during COVID-19.

SOLUTION: Creation of a system to record and share problems related to access to health services and then inform the public and health authorities about these constraints so that they can be responded to. By providing timely data, the platform improves the management of access barriers and enables advocacy and collaboration among stakeholders such as patients and families, civil society organizations and public health institutions. The possibility of expanding the project to other Latin American countries is being evaluated.

UNIDAD DE TELESALUD ANGORA UC

 Chile

CHALLENGE: Faced with pandemic-related closure restrictions, health centres reduced by 74% the face-to-face activities that responded to prevention and treatment programs for various diseases.

SOLUTION: A telehealth unit and a call centre for Ancora users were established to initially attend to the community's questions and needs regarding COVID-19 and later incorporate other functions such as orientation and scheduling of care. A telehealth strategy was implemented after reinforcing the necessary infrastructure that included teleconsultation services in video and telephone format, and the digital channels of the health centres (web page and social networks) were optimized to communicate with the community and address other health concerns.

TELEHEALTH BOOTH

 Brazil

CHALLENGE: During the COVID-19 pandemic the difficulties accessing specialized healthcare were exacerbated.

SOLUTION: Telemedicine booths were set up across Brazil so that people could have online medical consultations covering over 20 medical specialties and therapy services (mental health, speech therapy, nutrition, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy). In 15 months, SAS Brazil has delivered more than 30.000 consultations.

REGIONAL TOURISM AND HEALTH PROGRAM

 Trinidad and Tobago

CHALLENGE: Caribbean countries are highly dependent on travel and tourism. Travel/tourism-related illnesses are not only a health and security risk but, can cause reputational damage and economic instability in Caribbean economies as evidenced by COVID-19.

SOLUTION: To improve public health and promote travel safety, Caribbean health institutions partnered with the tourism sector to create an information system and travel app. Now travellers and health-care/tourism professionals can access the latest travel regulations, learn about safe locations to visit, and identify best practices to stay safe (food, hospitality and environmental sanitation). The solution preceded the COVID-19 pandemic but was adapted to relay regional travel practices during the pandemic.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

Thank each project which participated in the 2021 call. There have been so many excellence projects taking place during the pandemic, improving the delivery of equitable health services to all people. We commend each of these projects.

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