

Disseminating Urban Health Models for Scaling 15 November, 2019

Thematic Note: **Partnering with Public Systems for improving the health of urban women and children**

Background:

Working together or in collaboration has been recognised as one of the best approaches for development. A strong collaboration between Government and NGOs / Public and Private sectors has been the growing hope for the last few decades in the process of development. While it is believed that the government needs to play this important role for developing and implementing policies and programmes for the welfare of its citizens, there is an almost equal ownership assumed by civil society organisations to implement such programmes at the grass roots level as NGOs are better acquainted as the third sector to deliver and act in partnership with the government.

The term Partnership is much more than a new concept brought out in the light of development. A partnership entails cross-sector collaboration in which organisations work together in a **transparent, equitable and mutually beneficial way towards a sustainable goal** and where those defined as partners agree to commit resources and share the risks as well as the benefits associated with the partnership (Dutta and Nath, 2013)¹. It can also be defined as a formal agreement between two or more parties that have agreed to work together in the pursuit of common goals².

At SNEHA, we believe in forging strong bonds with different municipal, state and central government systems to maximise our impact and sustain our work effectively. We work closely with all levels across government systems – from public health leaders to police officers, institutions and community-level workers.

Operating Principles:

Drawing upon the above proposition, SNEHA's different partnership models support evidence based on transparency, equitability and mutual benefit. A few examples are:

1. **Transparent:** SNEHA's Maternal and Newborn Health programme, along with Municipal Corporations, established the referral networks within the multi-tiered public health system in Mumbai and six neighbouring corporations. We have jointly drafted clinical and referral protocols to improve coordination, communication and documentation across various municipal health facilities. These

¹ Dutta, S. & Nath, A. (2013). Partnership in Rural Development: GO-NGO Partnership. New Delhi: New Delhi Publishers

² GO-NGO Partnership: A Developmental Approach for Health Sector in Northeast India by Dr. Bijoy Das. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* Volume 24, Issue 1, Ver. 3 (January. 2019) 28-32

improvements aim to improve the utilisation of underutilised health facilities and ensure that high risk pregnancies receive timely and appropriate care. Periodic regional referral meetings among representatives from different levels of health facilities have now become part of these Municipal health systems. These meetings help them to discuss difficult cases, enhance communication and reach amicable solutions to issues, based on evidence and in a transparent manner. This referral network has facilitated 52,000 referrals of high-risk pregnant women ensuring access to Emergency Obstetrics Care (EmOC)³.

- 2. Equitable:** We have worked with Municipal Corporations towards strengthening primary health services for provision of antenatal care. It has resulted in improved availability and quality of care at Ante Natal Care (ANC) Clinics in health posts across Mumbai and its neighbouring cities. This availability of quality care, has worked to the advantage of the socio-economically vulnerable populations.
- 3. Mutually beneficial:** SNEHA's Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children (PVWC) programme works closely with the police to enable police personnel to handle the cases of gender based violence, sensitively. The guidelines for managing such cases have also been drafted jointly. SNEHA has been appointed as the "Regional Nodal Agency" to train Police personnel across 91 police stations of Mumbai. So far, 6,142 police personnel have been trained on responding to survivors of violence (2014 - March 2019). The feedback received from police mentions that they appreciate the back end support from SNEHA in addressing cases of gender based violence.

SNEHA's upcoming dissemination meet – '**Disseminating Urban Health Models for Scaling**' will anchor a panel discussion on **Partnering with Systems**.

The objective of the panel is to disseminate partnership efforts between the public systems and non-government actors. The aim is to encourage dialogue among different government and municipal actors like the health system, police, ICDS, District Legal Aid Services and NGO representatives regarding how partnerships can be formed and strengthened to increase coverage, share responsibilities and improve the quality of service delivery towards improving the health of women and children.

³ SNEHA data from 2012 – 2018