Implementing a National Tuberculosis Screening Program in the Maldives
(Ministry of Health | Division of HIV/TB | Maldives)

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**BACKGROUND**
- The Republic of the Maldives is a small archipelago nation in South Asia with a geographically dispersed population.
- National goal to eliminate TB by 2025.
- Need to screen all high-risk populations one atoll at a time.
- EndTB campaign was launched in early 2019 with many challenges.
  - Needed more training, monitoring, and money.
  - Needed a more systematic approach.

**PROJECT GOALS**
- Improve the National TB Screening Program and implement it in the 14 islands within Lhaviyani Atoll (screen ~7,500 people).
- Launch the TB Screening Program by the end of 2019 in Lhaviyani Atoll.

**FOUR MAIN GOALS:**
1. Organize strategic planning meetings to determine how to improve the existing program.
2. Increase the rigor, effectiveness, and standardization of community health worker trainings.
3. Build new public-private partnerships with local businesses to increase program funding and expand program reach.

**ACTION PLAN**
1. Wrote a proposal to WHO for $6,000 to fund the implementation of the screening program.
2. Organized/co-facilitated a stakeholder planning meeting with atoll administration and MoH staff.
3. Redesigned the TB screening training for community health workers and co-facilitated the training of 23 community health workers/lab staff.
4. Designed a pre- and post-test to evaluate the effectiveness of the training.
5. Calculated population screening targets per island by analyzing existing national data.
6. Co-facilitated a Partners Forum with local business leaders, MoH staff, and hospital managers to discuss new public-private partnerships.
7. Created a detailed budget breakdown of the program costs per island to present to business leaders at the Partners Forum.
8. Updated the data collection tool to more accurately monitor the screening.
9. Designed a health promotional poster to encourage individuals to get screened.
10. Designed template banners and invitations for the program launch ceremony to be used in all atolls.
11. Created a step-by-step implementation manual that includes all the steps needed to implement this program in a new atoll.

**TIME PERIOD OF IMPLEMENTATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task (June 30th - Aug 14th)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/15-16/19</td>
<td>Stakeholder meeting with local hospital administration and MoH staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/17-19/19</td>
<td>Community health worker/lab staff training on screening procedures</td>
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<td>8/1-3/19</td>
<td>Partners Forum with representatives from 10 local resorts</td>
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<td>8/8/19</td>
<td>Completion of the Implementation Manual</td>
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**PROJECT IMPACT**
- Trained twenty-three community health workers/lab staff on TB screening protocols.
- Established the first public-private partnerships with resorts that increased program funding by 25%.
- Wrote a 70-page step-by-step manual on implementing the National TB screening Program that will be used to implement the program nation-wide.

**PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**
- Applied:
  - Coursework in international infectious diseases to understand the mechanisms of TB.
  - Grant-writing to write a WHO proposal, survey methods to refine data collection tools, and qualitative research methods to conduct stakeholder interviews.
- Learned:
  - Budgeting, training material development, and program implementation.
  - Interpreting prevalence data and calculating the size of the target population.
  - Negotiating public-private partnerships and conducting stakeholder strategy meetings.

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**REFERENCES**