

*Candidate Statement***Section A. Contact Information**

Country	Cambodia
Name	Hara Mihalea
Position/ Organization	Program Director
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Section B. Statement of intent (max. 300 words)

In no more than 300 words, please describe how your professional background makes you a suitable candidate for this post and also describe what you would like to achieve if you were elected to this post.

As a health communications professional with more than 15 years experience in developing and managing public health programs, primarily in TB, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health, and in a variety of settings (Cambodia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and the United States), I am ready to take up an active advisory role and support the Vice Chairs and Chairs to plan and work towards achieving the working groups objectives; set priorities for action; and support the team effort of the sub-group on country-level ACSM to achieve the target of 20 priority countries implementing multi-sector, participatory ACSM initiatives and monitoring and evaluating their outcomes. I would also want to help to give TB a higher profile on national, regional and international policy agendas and continue to build the capacity of national TB programs and partnerships. I passionately want to be part of ultimately effecting sustainable societal and behavioral changes aimed at ensuring access to TB treatment and care for all.

Building on my academic studies, I have enhanced and honed my knowledge and skills in health communication, community mobilization and advocacy to assist partners at all levels to generate political, social and behavioral change in health policy and practice. I have provided technical support to Ministries of Health to develop national communication strategies, served as PATH's Asia Regional TB representative and I am currently giving support to partners in Cambodia to develop ACSM strategies for TB control at national and provincial levels.

I am currently involved in developing and testing innovative public-private mix models with the National TB Program using evidence-based and community-driven ACSM activities to improve case detection and treatment outcomes, empower affected communities and reduce stigma and discrimination.

Section C. Short biography (max. 300 words)

In this section, please provide a short biography outlining your academic background, professional experience, and any major project/initiative that highlight your knowledge of advocacy, communication and social mobilization at country level.

Academic background

At university in the USA and then in Thailand I studied community health education and health systems development. At the heart of my undergraduate studies in New York and postgraduate studies in Bangkok was the aim to acquire advanced skills and competency in health communication, advocacy and social mobilization. By studying in two very different countries, I was able to maximize my understanding of the importance of cultural, social and political contexts when developing and implementing ACSM related strategies. My thesis for the award of Masters in Public Health focused on creating an enabling environment for neighborhood advocacy to succeed in establishing an emergency home for the care of AIDS affected Thai children in a slum community of Bangkok.

Professional experience

My varied country experience supporting government Ministries, local NGOs and multilateral partners has given me valuable insights into what works in terms of advocacy, communication and social mobilization – whether it is developing a National Communication Strategy for Routine Immunization for Cambodia and Myanmar, giving technical support on Behavioral Change Communication to an international NGO in India, providing a communications perspective to the development of Cambodia's National Reproductive Health Strategy, supporting UNICEF on developing communication messages for child health or leading provincial level activities on public-private mix approaches to TB DOTS in Cambodia – I have a wealth of expertise in applying evidence-based global knowledge related to ACSM activities, especially to developing public-private partnerships and the management of TB and HIV/AIDS.

Currently, as the Program Director of PATH's work in Cambodia, I am providing technical support to TB partners to design and implement national and provincial level ACSM strategies, including the development of appropriate TB communication materials, outreach and mass media campaigns and interpersonal communications for public health staff and private sector pharmacists.