

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

Country	USA
Name	Romel S Lacson
Position/ Organization	Amaya Lacson TB Photovoice Project
Email	amayalacson@bellsouth.net

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.

Tragedy struck my family in the summer of 2004. Claudia and Emma Lacson, my wife and daughter, died as a result of complications due to tuberculous meningitis. Ironically, this drama took place in the United States while I was working for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). How could this happen? That is a question that continues to perplex and enrage me as it did in the months following their untimely deaths. 2005 started with a recognition that I could not continue to work at the CDC without trying to examine the complexity and enormity of not only Claudia and Emma's death but also the issue of tuberculosis claiming the lives of millions. Selfishly, I needed to know the people behind the numbers and the bio-medical disease. What was their story and how was it similar and different from my own? Under this cathartic veil, I founded the Amaya-Lacson Tuberculosis Photovoice (TBPV) Project. In a world where grand plans of being TB-free and triumphs of bio-medical research are often met with silence and indifference in the communities of those whose lives have been lost due to TB, TB Photovoice aims to critique and supplement the master TB narrative with an alternate view framed by images and stories shared among persons affected by TB in different areas around the globe (Thailand, Brazil, Mexico, US and South Africa). We learn from each others' local and world views on the paradoxes that exist around tuberculosis and other diseases caused by structural violence. How will we regularly critique our advocacy efforts in order to ensure that these community narratives are not being lost in the dominant rhetoric? My intent as a Core Group member is to add these critical perspectives to our advocacy and communication efforts and to offer alternatives to current social mobilization practices.

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.

Romel S Lacson is currently the director and founder of the Amaya Lacson Tuberculosis Photovoice Project (TBPV). TBPV aims to empower TB affected communities by creating unlimited opportunities for them to contribute to reducing suffering due to TB and poverty . Through our collaboration with non-governmental and governmental organizations, TBPV is now underway in the US-Mexico Border region; Chiang Mai, Thailand; Rio De Janeiro, Brazil; South Carolina and South Africa. Concurrently, Lacson is completing his PhD in medical anthropology. His research is focused on exploring the documented practice and impacts of Photovoice, a participatory action research method, conducted trans-nationally in four sites (Brazil, US-Mexico Border, Thailand, and South Carolina) with persons affected by tuberculosis (TB). In practice, he is interested in developing a critique of and an alternative to current models of tuberculosis advocacy efforts. From 1999-2005, Lacson worked as a behavioral scientist in the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention. Highlights of his work there include the development of national HIV prevention indicators, conducting a national evaluation of HIV Prevention Community Planning and building evaluation capacity of health departments and non-governmental organizations. From 1997-1999, he worked as a health education consultant at the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, and he also served as a US Peace Corps Volunteer in South America from 1992-1994.