

IBP/ Knowledge Gateway is a Success ¹ ***Exchanging, Communicating and Sharing Knowledge in and among countries***

The Implementing Best Practices (IBP) Knowledge Gateway is a dynamic electronic tool designed to facilitate communication among public health professionals around the world. The IBP Knowledge Gateway provides users with an online “space” in which they can share knowledge, experiences, and lessons learned. Users can create their own communities of practice, or join already established communities of practice, in which they can initiate and respond to discussions, post announcements, add or view calendar items, and browse through or add documents to a virtual community library. Members can participate in discussions either through email or by going online. Members also have the ability to set their own email notification preferences to receive emails immediately, or as a digest, and to customize their own communities of practice using a range of background colors and logos. Although members must register to use the Knowledge Gateway, membership is free and registration is quick and easy.

The IBP Knowledge Gateway was launched in September 2004 by the World Health Organization’s Implementing Best Practices in Reproductive Health Initiative. Since then, over 4,600 people from 94 countries have become members of the IBP Knowledge Gateway. Members currently participate in 156 online communities of practice on topics ranging from Family Planning and HIV/AIDS Integration to Adolescent Reproductive Health.

The IBP Knowledge Gateway has served as the electronic platform for four virtual discussion forums which have reached over 2,300 participants. The purpose of these forums is to provide opportunities for synergy between sharing best practices in reproductive health and exchanging country-based and personal experiences. Each of these organized online forums focuses on a central theme, last for a set period of time (usually one month), and is led by experts in the field. Forum topics have included:

- ***Youth Forum on Pregnancy Prevention in a Time of HIV/AIDS*** (March - April 2005)
640 people from 82 countries participated in the forum. Of those, 87 people from 32 countries (28 of them developing countries) made a total of 129 postings.
- ***The Female Condom: Accelerating Access and Use*** (October - November 2005)
350 people from 30 countries participated in this forum which was held after a global consultation on the female condom.
- ***Client and Provider Perspectives on Integration of Family Planning Counseling and HIV/AIDS Services*** (May 2006)
477 people from 58 countries participated in the forum, making a total of 77 postings. A videoconference linking four sites (Ghana, Kenya, USA and Switzerland) helped to launch this forum.
- ***Leadership for Action: The contribution of nursing and midwifery to health and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals*** (September – October 2006)
Over 1,000 people from 94 countries joined the forum. Participants made a total of 65 postings. A videoconference linking seven sites was held on the first day on the same topic to launch this online discussion.

¹ 2006

In a user survey conducted in the spring of 2006, most respondents found the IBP Knowledge Gateway very useful. Eighty-one percent reported that participation in the IBP Global Community or other IBP Communities has improved their own knowledge and practices. Most of the survey respondents (82%) had already used or planned to use resources or practices shared through the IBP Communities in their own work. Survey responses also indicated that the IBP Knowledge Gateway was helping to increase communication among public health practitioners; 39% reported that they had either responded to messages sent out through the IBP Knowledge Gateway in email form or had actively participated in an online discussion. Seventy-three percent have shared emails received through the IBP Knowledge Gateway with colleagues or co-workers.

In July 2006, the World Health Organization (WHO) adopted the IBP Knowledge Gateway as its official corporate tool to support communities of practices for all of WHO. This adoption was a major accolade for the IBP Knowledge Gateway and indicates its growing potential to serve as a major portal for individuals and organizations interested in sharing information, knowledge and experiences related to public health.

What members are saying about the IBP Knowledge Gateway:

- Many thanks for the excellent information. I greatly appreciate the hard work that goes into making such relevant and needed information available to us. (India)
- I found the [Global Alliance for Nursing and Midwifery] discussions amazing. As an educator and clinician, I am most anxious to read and contribute to the Nursing and Midwifery for Making Pregnancy Safer community. (USA)
- The documents and discussions from the other colleagues have been very useful in improving my technical support within the WHO mandate in support of the health sector response to health problems, more specifically HIV. Thank you once again for keeping me on the loop of current knowledge and information. (Lesotho)
- I so regularly receive these updates from you, I just wanted you to know that I do actually read through - and much appreciate - your summary each time! In fact I occasionally forward to non Members, and adapt others for application to some of my day today work in progress. (Kenya)
- This [information] is really appreciated and so helpful in growing our country programs. (Swaziland)
- Thank you very much for your attention, we always wait for your new information. (Indonesia)
- We are very happy with the good development of your project. We are at your service for collaboration and coordination of activities for young people in Africa. (Senegal)