

VIRTUAL BUSINESS PLANNING FOR HEALTH PROGRAM: BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

A PARAGUAYAN NGO EXPANDS EXISTING FAMILY PLANNING AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROJECT

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In the capital of Paraguay, the Center for Information and Resources for Development (CIRD) works with local communities to increase the impact of development projects within the country. Since its founding in 1988 CIRD has been a central leader in the following areas:

- Strengthening civil society organizations
- Increasing youth participation in the community
- Encouraging citizen engagement and dialogue between the civil society and the government
- Promoting efficient and transparent management of public and private organizations

In April 2008, CIRD, along with 9 other NGOs from Latin America, participated in the Virtual Business Planning for Health (VBPH) Program. The VBPH is a 20 week virtual team-based learning program developed by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) under the Leadership, Management and Sustainability Program (LMS). Throughout the VBPH, teams build expertise in creating and marketing a business plan to improve health outcomes.

During the VBPH offering in 2008, a team of 7 CIRD staff members created a business plan to provide consulting services in the areas of organizational development, financial administration and management



*"The VBPH program helped us uncover new opportunities as we discovered the capabilities of our organization."
~ Ruben Gaete Gómez (CIRD Manager of Public Politics)*

to Family Planning (FP) and Reproductive Health (RH) organizations. CIRD participants described the VBPH as a dynamic program that helped the team acquire concrete business planning knowledge while enhancing the group's ability to work as a team.

As a result of the VBPH, the CIRD staff created a successful business plan which achieved their primary goal of expanding an existing FP/RH project funded by the German government. Ruben Gaete Gómez, a VBPH participant, expressed that the program did not only help the organization receive more funding from its current donor, but also "helped us uncover new opportunities as we discovered the capabilities of our organization."

CIRD ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH THE VBPH

- Received 80% of requested funding totalling \$70,000
- Expanded FP/RH project to cover an additional 10 municipalities and 4 state departments
- Motivated staff implemented the business plan within 6 months of VBPH completion

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