

Success Is Possible Global Health Success Stories



RX FOR
**CHILD
SURVIVAL**

A GLOBAL HEALTH CHALLENGE™

In the last 150 years, public health measures have eradicated diseases, dramatically reduced infant mortality, and significantly increased average life expectancy. Public health success stories at home and abroad demonstrate that improved global health is an achievable goal.

Vitamin A foils disease!

In 1970, Dr. Alfred Sommer and Keith West, of Johns Hopkins University, found that Vitamin A deficiency was linked to pediatric blindness and infant mortality. Vitamin A deficiency affects between about 140 million children and contributes to blindness and increases the risk of death from diarrhea, measles, and pneumonia.

THE SUCCESS: Sommer's and West's work led to the widespread use of Vitamin A supplements, which reduced childhood mortality by 34 percent in the developing world and saved millions of lives worldwide. The World Bank ranks Vitamin A supplementation among the most cost-effective of all health interventions. A single dose of Vitamin A costs only a few cents.

Community effort saves children's lives!

In 1972, Fazle Hasan Abed founded the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). BRAC's first major health program was to teach mothers to make oral rehydration solution from water, salt, and molasses to prevent the deaths of their children from dehydration caused by diarrhea. Over a 10-year period, BRAC health workers

visited every household in rural Bangladesh—13 million households.

THE SUCCESS: The results were dramatic—infant and child mortality fell from 258 deaths per thousand to 75 deaths per thousand. Bangladesh went from having one of the world's highest infant mortality rates to one that is just above the regional average.

Epidemic averted!

In November 2002, unaware he was contagious, a Hong Kong hotel visitor spread a virus—soon named SARS—to other hotel guests who carried it around the world. Within four months, SARS had claimed 154 lives in 22 countries.

THE SUCCESS: Researchers isolated SARS in a stunning four weeks and eradicated it before it spread further. Surveillance, advanced preparation, good communication, and worldwide cooperation helped formulate a rapid response, which contained the outbreak of this infectious disease before it turned into an epidemic.

Learn how you can be part of the success.
Visit pbs.org/rxforsurvival