

ResultsinBrief

Jembatan Project: towards Integrating Infertility in SRHR programming



Share-Net
Netherlands

Community of Practice
on Infertility

ResultsinHealth 


UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

*working for health
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Introduction

The issue of infertility is highly prevalent in the Global South, including in Indonesia, and has a devastating impact on those affected. Research shows that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focusing on SRHR pay hardly any attention to the problem of sub- or infertility, neither do they collaborate with support groups of clients at infertility clinics. From the previous project of University van Amsterdam (UvA) in Ghana and Kenya (part of Sharenet small grant), we have learned that these support groups are key in providing information on infertility and counselling and to address the stigma associated with infertility. The research also shows that health related support groups have an excellent track record of positively influencing NGOs.

To contribute to influencing SRHR NGOs to take up infertility, ResultsInHealth (RiH), UvA and the Share-Net Community of Practice (CoP) on Infertility started the preliminary work to support NGOs working in SRHR and infertility support groups to come together, share experiences and knowledge, and

collaborate. This project is called Jembatan¹.

The Jembatan project took place in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from June – November 2018. The project involved the International Plan Parenthood Association Yogyakarta branch (PKBI DIY), the Permata Hati infertility clinic and the support group for patients of Permata Hati clinic (PTPH support Group).

The project was intended to stimulate exchange and collaboration between the PTPH support group, PKBI DIY and Permata Hati Clinic with the goal of up scaling and improving interventions addressing infertility. Specifically, Jembatan promoted collaboration between the 3 organizations.



¹ Indonesian for bridge

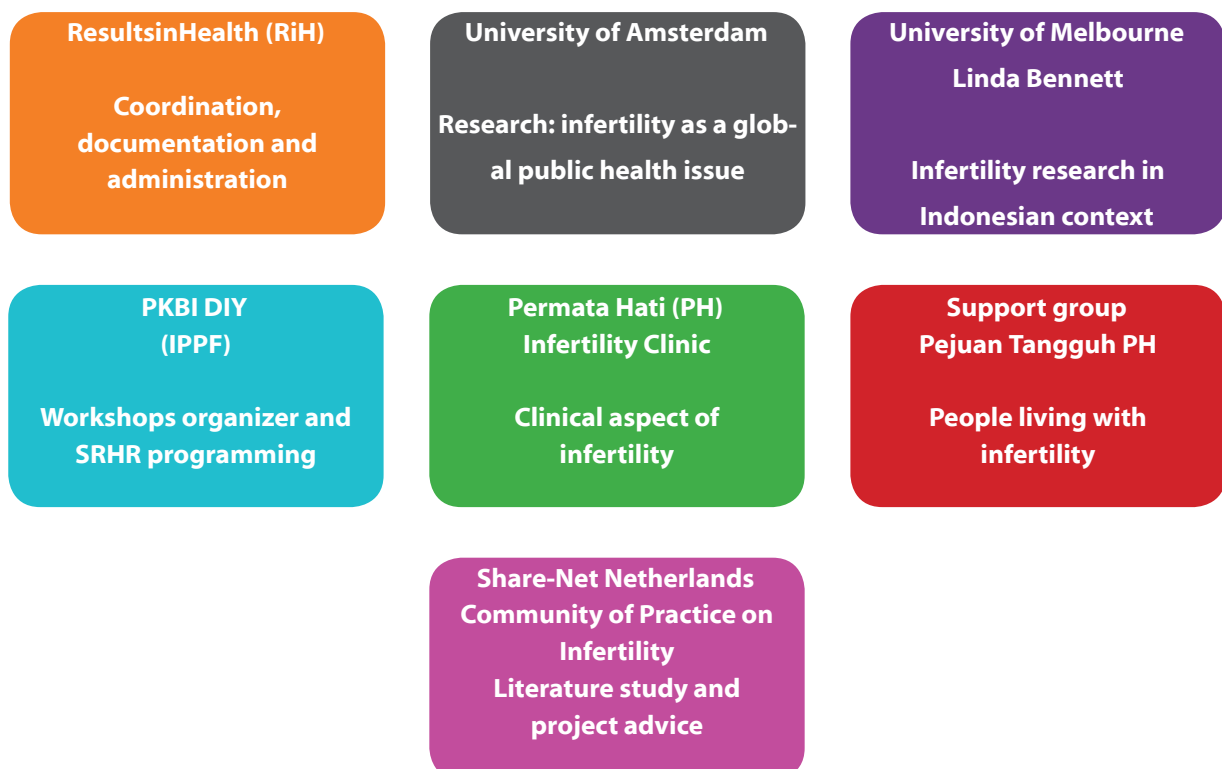


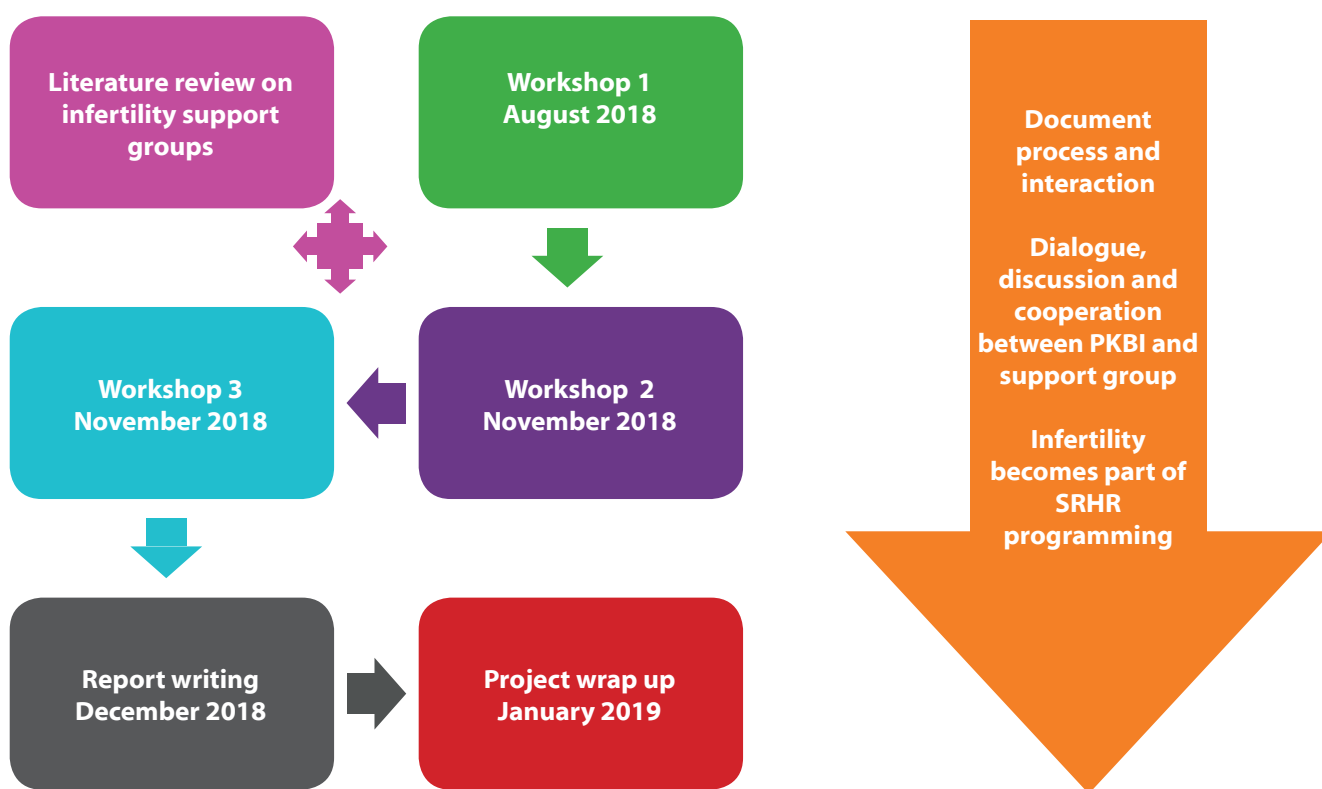
Figure 1. Stakeholders of Jembatan Project

The PTPH Support group

The PTPH support group is a voluntary and informal group of patients of the Permata Hati Infertility Clinic – Couples living with Fertility issues. The group provides support to their members online (via Facebook and WhatsApp) and face-to-face. The membership is closed, only patients with a medical record of Permata Hati Clinic are allowed to join and no

membership fee is required. There are currently about 500 members. The Facebook page is open for couples; while the WhatsApp group is only for the women. Issues shared and discussed range from medical information, info around infertility treatment and support for each other through sharing experiences, prayers and listening ears.

Activities of Jembatan Project



PKBI DIY

Established in 1957, the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association (IPPA or PKBI in Indonesian) is the oldest NGO which leads the family planning movement in Indonesia. PKBI has a national office in Jakarta and regional branches in almost

every province in Indonesia, including in Yogyakarta. PKBI DIY was established in 1967. Initially PKBI DIY was a training centre, but overtime its activities expanded to include: research, community engagement, counselling, and outreach advocacy.

Results

Workshop 1

Three workshops were held (August – November 2018). The first workshop, held in August was meant to introduce the project's stakeholders, the issues of infertility globally and in Indonesia and initiate dialogues and discussions between the stakeholders on issues around infertility in Indonesia.

Challenges of couples living with infertility:

- Serious psychological issues - sadness
- Pressure from family and communities
- Limited access to basic information
- Financial cost of treatment
- Lack of insurance coverage or subsidized treatment
- Difficulties in involving men/husband in the treatment trajectory

Workshop 1:
"The services of the clinic and its facilities are not optimal...but we do not know where else to go and I am not always able to control my emotions... and receive no support from the clinic on this issue"

Workshop 1:
"We face challenges mostly from my mother in-law, she disagrees that we seek treatment. This makes us sad, especially my husband. This sadness has a domino effect; if he is stressed then I am also stressed.... and this has an impact on our treatment"

female member of PTPH

Workshop 2

The second workshop was held in November, with the goal to improve the knowledge and skills of the members of PTPH on the support group, clinical aspects of infertility and on self and group empowerment.

Highlights

- Stakeholders are very engaged and eager to be involved. They highly value the project and its activities.
- The members of the infertility support group are pleased that they finally receive an appropriate attention on their issues.
- Sharing information, getting information, counselling and access to affordable treatment are core issues for the support group members.
- Female support group members are too busy with their own treatment and less interested in developing and strengthening the support group as organization.
- Referral system is established between the clinic at PKBI DIY and the Permata Hati Clinic. And a close collaboration has been started between PKBI DIY and PTPH Support group.

Workshop 2:
"The workshop on self-empowerment helped me to understand myself; and that we should not blame ourselves because we cannot have children."

Workshop 2:
"After the workshops 1 and 2, we were finally able to sit and talk to the Permata Hati clinic staff. They are starting to listen to us (the support group)."

Workshop 3

The third workshop was also held in November and was meant to define an agreement on the way forward for the period after the Jembatan project.

The way forward:

- PKBI DIY will continue working on the issue of infertility through their campaign, health education activities and establishment of referral system between PKBI and Permata

Hati clinic.

- Permata Hati clinic will continue sensitizing their staff to seek wider engagement to support the support group.
- PTPH support group will remain an informal and voluntary support group and will work closely with the PKBI DIY and Permata Hati Clinic.

Highlights after workshop 3

- The first radio campaign on the issue of fertility was held in January 2019, as a collaboration between PKBI DIY and PTPH support group.
- A meeting between the representatives of PTPH support

group and the Permata Hati clinic was also held in January 2019 to discuss how the clinic can improve their services and support to the support group.



Recommendations

Our recommendations for integration of infertility issues into SRHR programming are:

- Start with gaining a good understanding of the local context of infertility.
- Carefully identify and select partners and stakeholders to be involved and take into account capacity challenges.
- Raise awareness to get buy for integration.
- Establish dialogues among relevant parties.
- Build capacity of support group and members including to see beyond immediate treatment.
- Explore using a "SHIRIM" (ShareNet International Rapid Improvement Model) style collaborative approach to create concrete changes.



Contact information

The Jembatan Project is part of the ShareNet International Small Grant 2018.

Contact information:

E: ContactUs@resultsinhealth.org

T: +31 71 760 1200

I: www.resultsinhealth.org

