

Mahatma Gandhi Public Health Fellowship

Shanti Ashram is an International Gandhian centre for development, learning and collaboration based in Coimbatore, India. Since its establishment in 1986, the Ashram has acted on Mahatma Gandhi's vision of 'Sarvodaya' – progress for all – through pioneering work in education, health, sustainability, livelihoods and interfaith relations. To empower the most vulnerable sections of the society, the Ashram's programmes are centered on the holistic well-being of children, women and the elderly.

The **International Centre for Child and Public Health (ICPH)** is set up in the 30th year of the Ashram's operations. It is an innovative model of integrating primary care with public health to give every child a healthy start to life. Building on 30 years of Shanti Ashram's community service and leveraging its long-standing International and local partnerships, ICPH aims to become a nodal institution for clinical practice, active research, and global policy making in child and public health.

In its first year of operation:

- ✓ 7,000 sq.ft of built up space, children's health center, hospital on wheels , people's pharmacy and a public health desk was inaugurated
- ✓ 14,000 children and vulnerable adults served
- ✓ 9 MOUs signed with global institutions to secure access to world class expertise

This year, the centre aims to incubate with Gandhigram University a **Public Health Fellowship** to attract and develop leaders committed to public health practice and well-being of the most vulnerable communities.

As ICPH-GRU fellows, selected public health and medical professionals will have the opportunity to develop expertise and lead hands on interventions and research in the current core areas of Gandhigram Rural University and ICPH:

- 1. Public health practice and research:** The aim to improve the conditions and behaviours that affect health is complemented by research of public health issues and the education of future leaders who will go on to make an impact through practice, policy and research locally, regionally and globally.
- 2. Provision of healthcare services and adapting solutions:** Primary health care services are provided via ambulatory care and a hub-and-spoke model connecting the health centre with established and successful community centered offsite services. Preventive and promotive health services are provided to the communities through a proactive team of trained public health professionals. As established innovators in child health, the team at ICPH has experience in not only mapping causal factors but also in forecasting whether interventions are likely to work within a particular context based on cumulative learning about social and cultural norms, features of the environment and infrastructure, and people's education and skills.
- 3. Capacity Building of care providers and improved access for vulnerable communities:** Physicians are provided with accredited training in continued medical education (CME) that is centered on the needs of these professionals and that of their patients. To ensure the utilization of health services, there is a focus on demand generation of services by increasing community awareness and actively engaging community members in service delivery.
- 4. Research and Public policy:** Field-based research and presenting evidence-based practices for improvements in public policy is an integral part of the institution's framework. Data from the field is carefully collected and analyzed to understand service delivery and consumption of health products, optimize costs, increase efficiency, and share learnings with research communities as well as governmental and non-governmental partners.

5. Global partnerships: The scope of work being planned through the centre is strengthened by collaborations with the Government of India, UN agencies, the World Health Organization, Medical schools, faith-based organizations, academic institutions and development partners.

To be further developed:

- Eligibility criteria
- Application procedure
- Duration : 6 months
- Number of Fellows : 2
- Stipend, other logistical details
- End of Fellowship deliverables and joint evaluation
- Future prospects of Mahatma Gandhi Public Health Fellowship fellows