

Summary

- Nearly three decades of leadership and programme management experience in health and development, with particular experience in reproductive and sexual health, HIV, and human rights.
- An engaged and passionate feminist leader of organisational teams supporting programmes of national importance with multi-year budgets up to US\$34 million.
- Track record of establishing and maintaining effective relationships with a range of stakeholders in the HIV, health and development sectors, from grassroots community organizations and NGOs to government at national and state levels, bilateral and multilateral donors, and international agencies.
- Expertise in designing and executing complex, large-scale, multi-partner projects aligned with national priorities and community interests and successfully integrated with government systems.
- Enthusiastic and optimistic leader of effective teams up to 100 in size, committed to encouraging a supportive environment for professional growth of team members from diverse backgrounds.
- Experienced in programme and policy design, team management, budget and grant oversight, strategic information, work planning, new business development, capacity building, training, and facilitation.
- Reputation for integrity and quality, supporting the cause, and propelling quantifiable, sustained impact.

Professional Experience

International Planned Parenthood Federation

New Delhi

Regional Director, South Asia (2020-Present)

- Provide experienced leadership to 8 member associations (Family Planning Associations) across the region in programme and advocacy through a strong technical and advocacy team, along with financial oversight
- Lead the new personality of the Federation *For Choice, by Choice*
- Lead the professional team of nearly 25 people, supported by three Directors and nine EDs at the Member Association levels
- Engaged and contributed in developing Results Framework for Strategy 2028 of IPPF globally
- Trained 8 member associations in results framework through out South Asia and worked with them to segmentation targets for each one of them.
- Manage two important global functions across the federation – Information Technology and Impact and evidence through competent and strong team
- Diversified funding streams (added major donors such as WHO), work streams and technical areas (research and technology).
- Represented Federation in important conferences such as International AIDS Conference 2023, International Conference of Family Planning, FIGO conference, etc.
- Maintain collaborative relations with a range of donors, including the Global Fund; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; UNFPA; UNAIDS.
- Responsible for Global LGBTQI+ inclusion and diversity within the Federation
- Member of Directors' Leadership Team – global senior management team for the IPPF taking financial and policy decisions across the Federation, including budgets, technical directions and policies.
- Leading the Global Fund working group across the Federation for support, learning exchange and expansion of portfolio.
- Maneuvered partnerships and successful programmes in countries such as Afghanistan and Iran to respond to sexual and reproductive health of people who need it most including men, women, people with diverse gender and young people.
- Contribute and support the Board in membership, strategy and financial decision making for the Federation across 142 countries.
- Instrumental in formation of PRIDE@IPPF for membership from global Federation.

India HIV/AIDS Alliance

New Delhi

Chief Executive (2016-2020)

- Provide experienced leadership to India's foremost NGO committed to strengthening the country's HIV response and improving the health and wellbeing of at-risk communities.
- As a feminist leader accommodated internal policies, recruitment processes and procedures to respond to women and gender diverse people's needs and requirements.
- Managed three the Global Fund grants as Principal Recipient with high rating from 13 years (2007 – 2020) with as high as 21 SRs and 350 SSRs. Designed and managed largest single country project for MSM and transgender – lead first ever research led by community on intimate partner violence for transgender people.
- Lead the professional team of nearly 100, supported by three Directors and six Associate Directors.
- Diversified funding streams (added major donors such as USAID and NIH), work streams (reproductive and sexual health, TB and Hep C) and technical areas (research and technology).
- Initiated new business development function that generates funds from corporate partners and developing social enterprise and corporate social responsibility initiatives.
- Maintain collaborative relations with a range of donors, including the Global Fund; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; European Union; UNAIDS; UNDP; MAC AIDS Fund; ViiV Healthcare; Amplify Change; Elton John AIDS Foundation; PEPFAR; CDC; and USAID.
- Contribute to a strong and productive relationship with Frontline AIDS (formerly the International HIV/AIDS Alliance) and leverage same for the betterment of India's HIV response.
- Expanded geographical coverage of programmes to include at total of seven countries: India, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines, Indonesia, and Nepal.
- Manage government and civil society stakeholder with other Senior Management Team members, including National AIDS Control Organisation, TB Control Programme, state officers, National Technical Support Unit, and various civil society groups such as FHI 360, Family Planning Association of India, National AIDS Research Organisation, and Indian Council for Medical Research.
- Ensured establishment of Institutional Research Board (IRB) within Alliance India.
- Reputation of being firm, supportive and task-oriented with a high level of integrity, the courage to accept and correct mistakes, and the persistence needed to succeed.
- Contribute to national knowledge by newer initiatives such as pre-exposure prophylaxis for transgender communities, interventions for women in sex work operating at virtual sites, and sexual and reproductive issues of teen agers and young people born with HIV.

Director: Policy & Programmes (2007-2016)

- Directed Alliance India's programme, strategic information, research, and policy functions.
- Along with colleagues on the Senior Management Team (SMT), guided Alliance India's multi-disciplinary team to deliver per the organisation's strategy and mission.
- Led and expanded programme portfolio through responsive programme design, smooth implementation, and careful management of partner relations.
- Successfully managed a diverse portfolio of HIV programmes serving PLHIV and key populations with annual budgets from US\$50,000 to US\$9 million.
- Conceptualized, designed and strategized implementation of national-scale, the Global Fund-supported programmes providing HIV prevention for MSM, transgender women and hijras (Pehchan) and care & support for people living with HIV (Vihaan).
- Was CCM member with India CCM from 2010 to 2013 with active engagement of entire CSO group.
- Monitored organisational and programme budgets in collaboration with SMT.
- Shared responsibility with other Lead senior staff for new business development (including proposal design and drafting) to ensure sustainability of Alliance India.
- Contributed actively to new areas of fundraising and income development, such as the End AIDS India campaign and new models of social enterprise.

- Developed and strengthened relationships with government partners, including National AIDS Control Organisation, State AIDS Control Societies, Revised National TB Control Programme and mechanisms such the India Country Coordinating Mechanism.
- Provided strategic support and oversight to Alliance India team members working with government on policy and other programme activities.
- Ensured quality and accuracy of Alliance India's reporting to government and donors.
- Effectively represented Alliance India in various forums and support external relations and communications, including message and content development.

UK Department for International Development

New Delhi

Challenge Fund Manager (2005-2007)

- Managed a portfolio of 16 projects with a total value of INR 322,767,320 (£3.8 million).
- Achieved success with all projects in both financial measures and technical outputs.
- Established and maintained Challenge Fund management systems, ensured that projects were delivered in a timely manner and within budget.
- Lead Challenge Fund strategic and management decisions, in consultation with the Programme Management Office (PMO).
- Ensured delivery of Terms of Reference for each funding component, with ultimate responsibility for grants solicitation, negotiation, contract management and evaluation.
- Reported regularly to PMO Head on contracting, project progress, and risk mitigation.
- Managed complex partner relationships with contracted organisations and external stakeholders like NACO and SACS.
- Advocated successfully with NACO to expand key Challenge Fund successes, such as Opioid Substitution Therapy, across India.
- In collaboration with Finance and Grants Manager, ensured strong financial systems and reporting.

United Nations Development Program

New Delhi

Consultant: Enabling Environment (2004-2005)

- Through secondment to National AIDS Control Organization, Government of India, provided technical support to NACO's Joint Director (Information Education and Communication) on issues related to the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV and AIDS (GIPA), gender and Targeted Interventions.
- Served as a technical resource for SACS and NGOs to support planning and monitoring of outreach programs including Targeted Interventions, School AIDS Education Programmes, and Drop-in Centres.
- Led special projects with NACO and partners, including Central Reserve Police Force and National Highways Authority of India.
- Member of Technical Resource Panel for Innovations Fund.
- Trained PLHIV groups at national and state levels.
- Advised NACO on violations of human rights, including women's rights.
- Supported communications division for advocacy with representatives and institutions like religious organisations and Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Gujarat State AIDS Control Society, Government of Gujarat

Ahmedabad, Gujarat

NGO Advisor (1999-2004)

- Liaised with NGOs on technical and financial matters to ensure effective implementation of National AIDS Control Programme Phase II.
- Designed first every training on gender responsive HIV programme including role of women in HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.
- Led efforts to apply national guidelines to HIV prevention projects in Gujarat.
- Expanded the number of Targeted Interventions in state from 24 to 200 over five years.
- Supported every activity of Gujarat SACS, including representing government at international conferences and in the development of national Action Plans.
- Guided bureaucrats and political leaders such as Chief Secretary and Health Minister to further the cause of HIV programme in prevention, care and treatment.
- Contributed to formation of Gujarat State Network of People Living with HIV (GSNP+).

Pacific Institute of Women's Health

Los Angeles, California, USA

Programme Coordinator (1997-1999)

- Contributed to analysis and report preparation for seven-country study on the relationship between economic empowerment and sexual health of women in developing countries.
- Established organizational network and linkages with Asian NGOs working in California.
- Designed and conducted training of supervisors and implementers on sexual health and education for adolescents in the local Asian community.
- Represented organization at various meetings and conferences throughout California and in other states at meetings with partners at Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) and Johns Hopkins University.

Center for Health Education Training & Nutrition Awareness

Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Programme Resource Supervisor (1989-1997)

- Developed and managed Adolescent Health and Development Programme of CHETNA.
- Managed organisation's Child-to-Child health programme and later expanded portfolio to develop an entire wing on school-going and adolescent health.
- Developed resource materials and publications for training and field support.
- Became an established and effective trainer for NGO and government supervisors in gender and development.

Society for Education, Welfare and Action (SEWA Rural)

Jhaghadia, Gujarat

Programme Coordinator (1986-1988)

- Developed tribal and rural women's income generating activities in five villages.
- Coordinated workshops for social and economic development of women.
- Designed and implemented non-technical curriculum for adolescent tribal boys at organisation's residential institute.

Education

Lancaster University, UK

Master of Science (MSc) in International Executive Management (2016)

McGill University, Montreal, Canada

International Masters in Practicing Management (IMPM) Programme (2014-2015)

University of Vadodara, Gujarat

Master of Social Work (MSW), Faculty of Social Work (1984-1986)

St. Xavier's College, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad

Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Psychology, (1983-1986)

Selected Publications

- Simran Shaikh, Gitau Mburu, Viswanathan Arumugam, Naveen Mattipalli, Abhina Aher, **Sonal Mehta**, and James Robertson. "Empowering communities and strengthening systems to improve transgender and hijra health: Experience from the Pehchan program in India." *Journal of the International AIDS Society* (2016).
- Naveen Kumar Mattipalli, Gitau Mburu, Priti Prabhugate, Pawan Dhall, Claire Mathonsi, Prakash Mishra, Bangyuan Wang, **Sonal Mehta**, and James Robertson. "Understanding intimate partner violence among men who have sex with men and transgender women in India." *Reproductive Health Matters* (in press, expected 2016).

- Ravindra Rao, Viswanathan Arumugam, Charanjit Sharma, Simon W. Beddoe, Tim Peters, **Sonal Mehta** and James Robertson. *Community Action on Harm Reduction in India: Impact Assessment*. New Delhi: India HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2015.
- Aruna Bhattacharya, Viswanathan Arumugam, Kaushik Biswas, Charanjit Sharma, Francis Joseph, Simon W. Beddoe, **Sonal Mehta** and James Robertson. *Double Trouble: Injection Drug Use and Sexual Behaviour - Findings from a cross-sectional qualitative study of HIV vulnerabilities among People Who Inject Drugs and their sex partners in Bihar and Manipur, India*. New Delhi: India HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2015.
- Singh, Yadavendra, Abhina Aher, Simran Shaikh, **Sonal Mehta**, James Robertson, and Venkatesan Chakrapani. "Gender Transition Services for Hijras and Other Male-to-Female Transgender People in India: Availability and Barriers to Access and Use." *International Journal of Transgenderism*, Volume 15, Issue 1, 2014.
- Indu Capoor and **Sonal Mehta**. "Talking about love and sex in adolescent health fairs in India." *Reproductive Health Matters*, 5:22-27, 1995.
- Minaxi Shukla and **Sonal Mehta**. "Relating learning to life: appropriate sex education." *Health for the Millions*, 21(3):31-4, 1995.

Selected Conference Abstracts

- R. K. Chauhan, M. Bamrotia, A. Saravanan, S. Chakraborty, G. Pandey, P. Kumar, B. Ubarhande, V. Arumugam, R. Huidrom, R.S. Gupta, Mathew, U. Chawla, **S. Mehta** *Determining denominator – national effort to firm data on Lost to Follow up (LFU) on treatment for optimization of resources*. IAS 2018: Poster Abstract no. THPEE727
- M. Balani, R. K. Chauhan, V. Arumugam, R. Huidrom, U. Chawla, **S. Mehta**. *Countering double trouble - PLHIV community led intensified case finding of TB cases amongst PLHIV in India*. IAS 2018: Poster Abstract no. TUPED449
- D. Kumar, V. Arumugam, F. Joseph, N. R. Manilal, U. Chawla, **S. Mehta**. *Easy to preach difficult to practice – Experiences of evidence-based programme management*. IAS 2018: Poster Abstract no. WEPEE629
- P. Bhutia, K. Kishore, V. Arumugam, U. Chawla, **S. Mehta**. *Spreading WINGS (Women Initiating New Goals of Safety): Cross-cultural adaptation, feasibility and preliminary effects of an intervention to address GBV among women who use drugs in India*. IAS 2018: Poster Abstract no. WEPED403
- D. Kulshreshtha, R. Sarkar, S. Kandaswamy, A. Aher, U. Chawla, **S. Mehta**. *Modern response to modern living - Addressing HIV service needs in spa and massage parlors for men having sex with men (MSM) in India*. IAS 2018: Poster Abstract no. WEPEE625
- S.W. Beddoe, T. Imlong, V. Arumugam, C. Sharma, **S. Mehta**, J. Robertson. *Advocacy Platforms for PWID: Establishing State Drug User Forums under the Asia Action on Harm Reduction programme in India*. IHRC 2015: Oral Abstract no. 0618.
- C. Gurumayum, V. Arumugam, S.W. Beddoe, **S. Mehta**, T. Peters, J. Robertson. *Family Values: Female Outreach Workers as Catalysts to Engage Families of People Who Inject Drugs to Increase Uptake of Harm Reduction Services under the Hridaya Programme in India*. IHRC 2015: Poster Abstract no. 0408.
- V. Arumugam, K. Biswas, C. Sharma, F. Joseph, S.W. Beddoe, **S. Mehta**, J. Robertson. *More vulnerability, more risk: Findings from a cross-sectional qualitative study on the multiple vulnerabilities experienced by People Who Inject Drugs (PWID) in Bihar and Manipur, India*. IAS 2015: Poster Abstract no. TUPEC545.
- K. Biswas, V. Arumugam, K. Pal, **S. Mehta**, J. Robertson, S. Tucker, S. Rakesh, N.S. Reddy. *Smear Tactics: Cervical cancer awareness and vulnerability among WLHIV and FSWs: Findings from the Koshish programme's Pap smear study in India*. AIDS 2014: Poster Abstract no. MOPE380.
- S. Shaikh, N.K. Matipalli, A. Aher, J. Robertson, **S. Mehta**. *Factors associated with condom use among MSM, transgenders, and hijras in sex work: Experience from the Pehchan programme in India*. AIDS 2014: Poster Abstract no. WEPE113.
- H. Khosa, **S. Mehta**, C. Bhatt, Y. Singh, J. Robertson. *Building Capacity of MSM & TG CBOs to Partner with Government HIV Prevention Interventions in India*. ICAAP 2013: Oral Abstract no. WeOC09-02.
- Y. Singh, V. Chakrapani, A. Aher, S. Shaikh, **S. Mehta**, S. Rakesh, J. Robertson. *Identifying Access Barriers for Transgenders Seeking Gender Transition Services in India*. ICAAP 2013: Poster Abstract no. 1711.

- K. Pal, D. Patel, M. Pardesi, Padmavathy, A. R. Babu, P. Bhandarkar, S. Betai, A. J. Sunder Singh, G. Ramanujiah, **S. Mehta**, J. Robertson. Community-led Advocacy to Address SRH Needs of PLHIV: Experience from the Koshish programme in India. ICAAP 2013: Poster Abstract no. 1926.
- S. Chakraborty, K. Biswas, B. Ubarhande, N.K. Mattipalli, V. Arumugam, S. Rakesh, **S. Mehta**, J. Robertson. Paving the Pathway: PLHIV community consultations enhance national care and support programme in India. ICAAP 2013: Poster Abstract no. 1918.
- H. Khosa, **S. Mehta**, S. Shaikh, A. Aher, J. Robertson. Building a Cadre of Transgender and Hijra Master Trainers: A targeted initiative by Pehchan in India. ICAAP 2013: Poster Abstract no. 2006.
- V. Arumugam, K. Biswas, S. Rao, **S. Mehta**, S. Rakesh, J. Robertson. Positive living education among female IDUs with hepatitis C and HIV co-infection: experience from the Chanura Kol project, Manipur, India. IHRC 2013: Oral Abstract no. 0686.
- S. Grote, S. Middleton-Lee, J. Robertson, **S. Mehta**. Reaching key populations in SRH/HIV integration: Recommendations from a global intervention review to identify strategies to increase the responsiveness and relevance of integrated programming to the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) needs. AIDS 2012: Oral Poster Abstract no. WEPDE0102.
- K. Biswas, T. Manikandakumar, S. Grote, K. Pal, **S. Mehta**, J. Robertson. Addressing the unmet sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of people living with HIV (PLHIV): Results from a baseline study in four states in India. AIDS 2012: Oral Poster Abstract no. WEPDE0103.

A complete list of publications is available on request.

Participation in Major Conferences and Meetings

- **IAS 2018:** 22nd International AIDS Conference, Amsterdam, Netherlands, July 2018.
- **IAS 2017:** 21st International AIDS Conference, Paris, France, July 2017.
- **IHRC 2015:** 24th International Harm Reduction Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, October 2015.
- **IAS 2015:** 8th Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment & Prevention, Vancouver, Canada, July 2015.
- **ICAAP 2011:** 10th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, Busan, South Korea, August 2011.
- **ICAAP 2009:** 9th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, Bali, Indonesia, August 2009.
- **United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on AIDS**, New York, United States, June 2008, as a participant and speaker.
- **AIDS 2002:** 14th International AIDS Conference, Barcelona, Spain, July 2002.
- **AIDS 2000:** 13th International AIDS Conference, Durban, South Africa, July 2000.
- **Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace**, Beijing, China, September 1995.

Advisory Boards and Technical Committees

- Chair of the Steering Committee of Women4Global Fund
- Leading member of India Working Group that contributed for the 6th Replenishment for the Global Fund
- Member of the NGO Delegation for Developing Countries to the Global Fund (2017-present)
- Member of the NGO Delegation on Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS, actively engaged as member of GAM review and reviewing UBRAF as NGO Delegation, also in PCB Bureau (2016-2018)
- Member of the NACO Technical Resource Group for Care & Support (2015-present)
- Member of the Research Think Tank of the Frontline AIDS (2013-present)
- Member of WHO Technical Committee to draft guidance on HIV testing, counselling and care for adolescents living with HIV (2013)
- Abstract reviewer for International AIDS Society Conferences on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment & Prevention (2011 and 2013)
- Member of NACP IV Working Groups on Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM), on Injection Drug Users (IDUs), and on Care & Support (2011-2012)
- Alternative Member, Civil Society Seat on the Global Fund India Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) for two terms (2008-10 and 2010-12)

- Member of NACP III Working Groups on MSM and on IDUs (2006-2007)

Personal

- *Languages:* Fluent in English, Hindi and Gujarati. Understand basic Bengali and Marathi.
- *Social Involvement:* Active member of Citizen's Initiative, a civic body of 39 members (citizens and NGOs) in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, working to support communities after the earthquake in 2001 and the communal riots in 2002. Board member (2006-present) of Marag, an Ahmedabad-based NGO working to support shepherd communities in India.
- *Hobbies and Activities:* Traveling, playing cards and dancing.
- *Citizenship:* India

References:

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2. **Christine Stegling**, Deputy Executive Director: Policy, Advocacy and Knowledge
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