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# The Trinidad and Tobago Virtual Health Library

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## **TTVHL Project Report**

presented by Ernesta Greenidge  
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# Acknowledgements

- Guidance from Permanent Secretary, Executive Assistance and relevant staff of the Ministry of Health.
- Administrative assistance received from secretarial staff the Ministry of Health, National Library and Information System Authority and The University of the West Indies, Medical Sciences Library.
- Cooperation and support for meetings from the National Library and Information System Authority.
- Professional assistance from the T&T Representation, PAHO/WHO
- Members of Content and IT Committees.
- Ministry of Health GORTT
- Trinidad and Tobago Virtual Health Library National Advisory Committee and their various parent institutions and organisations for accommodating their participation in the committee.

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# Outline

- Conceptual Framework
- Management Structure
- The Way Forward

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# Conceptual Framework

- The TTVHL is conceived in the context of:
  - The development of the e-health component of National ICT plans.
  - Information support for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Health
    - The TTVHL provides a new channel through which the Government's Vision 2020 objective of a healthier populace can be effected

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## TTVHL Overall Goal...

- ...is to contribute to the development of health in Trinidad and Tobago by promoting the use of scientific and technical information for decision-making, thus empowering nationals [citizens] to live long, healthy, happy and productive lives.

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# The Specific Objectives

- to encourage the collection and dissemination of local research in health
- to utilize the potential for distance education in health
- to increase information support to researchers and
- to support public health information through the registration, organization, preservation, retrieval and dissemination of scientific and technical information and the promotion of equitable access to such information.

# Stakeholders

- **Ministry of Health** *with representation at the level of the Permanent Secretary*
- **Pan American Health Organization** *with representation at the level of the Office of the PWR*
- **Relevant Ministries**
  - Ministry of Public Administration and Information - *Telecommunications Advisor*
  - Ministry of Local Government - *Planning Officer*
- **Regional Health Authorities**
  - The five Regional Health Authorities were represented.
- **Library Services / Institutions**
  - Caribbean Epidemiology Centre - *Library and Information Services*
  - The College of Science Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago - *Library Services*
  - Medical Library Services - Government of Trinidad and Tobago
  - Trinidad and Tobago National Library and Information System Authority - *National Library Service*
  - Tobago Regional Health Authority - *Health Care Information Resources Centre*
  - The University of the West Indies Faculty of Medical Sciences - *Medical Sciences Library*

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# Establishment

- **In 2000**, an Interim National Advisory Committee for the VHL was established.
  - Nine meetings of the Committee were held over the period 2000 to 2003.
- **In June 2003**, the National Coordinator for the Interim National Advisory Committee for VHL wrote to the then Minister of Health encouraging him to appoint the National Advisory Committee for the VHL and proposed objectives for the Committee.
- **In March 2005**, the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago appointed the National Advisory Committee
- **In June 2005**, the Inaugural Meeting was held at the Board Room, Ministry of Health, Park and Edward Streets Port of Spain.
  - Twenty nine (29) meetings were held during 2005 – 2008.

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# Management Structure

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# National Advisory Committee

The Committee was charged with the responsibility for the:

- Development of a national plan for the establishment of the Virtual Health Library
- Definition and approval of projects
- Definition and approval of the content of the Virtual Health Library
- Identification and approval of training requirements
- Promotion of involvement in consortia in order to facilitate electronic access to documents
- Evaluation of the performance of the Virtual Health Library
- Conduct of promotional activities for the Virtual Health Library
- Organisation of periodic meetings of the Committee with stakeholders

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# Developing the National Plan of Work

- 1. Governance**
- 2. Content**
- 3. Information Technology**
- 4. Training**
- 5. Public Relations/Marketing and Outreach**

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# Governance

- Develop Governance document including Terms of Reference for working groups –(technical & content), and secretariat, public relations, marketing and outreach
- Monitor evaluate and report on progress of all aspects of the VHL project
- Submit Status Report/Report card to MOH and Cabinet on VHL activities
- Prepare funding proposals and budget submission
- Establish Coordinating Unit / Secretariat
- Provide representation at Virtual Health Library (VHL) and Caribbean Congress of Health Sciences Information (CRICS) Meeting

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# Working Groups

- Working groups for content and technical matters contribute to the work of the TTVHL.
- The Working Groups consist of staff members from the core collaborating institutions.
- They will liaise with the Secretariat to provide input on these specific areas.

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# Content

- Research and identify resources for posting
- Review and evaluate resources identified for posting
- Post and upload information into VHL
- Edit Content in accordance with QA standards
- Post and upload information on Website
- Research and determine new subject areas

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# Content

- Review MOH Website to determine appropriate linkages to TTVHL site
- Conduct content working group meetings
- Develop guides for education and training of various groups
- Research and draft policies, procedures, standards, guidelines and selection criteria including legal aspects for TTVHL content
- Negotiate and implement participation in consortia with stakeholders to enable shared access to documents and databases
- Negotiate and implement participation in regional and international consortia to enable shared access to documents and databases

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# Information Technology

- Manage, host and maintain the server (including upgrade)
- Create and store electronic documents.
- Utilise programmes to increase visibility e.g. Interface with Google
- Conduct Technical Working Group meetings
- Develop Disaster Plan
- Develop monitoring system from the IT perspective

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# Information Technology

- Document policies, procedures and standards
- Develop technical specifications for hardware at all participating institutions
- Enable interactive module for communities of practice
- Enable platform for Education/Training
- Adapt User Manuals for IT/Technical matters
- Contract Web Master to support continued growth of VHL

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# Training

- Refresher Training - Train the Trainers (Core collaborator staff)
- Train Core collaborators staff on new VHL methodologies and technologies
- Develop User Training Programmes and manuals
- Disseminate User Training Programmes and Manuals
- Train MOH/RHA staff and staff of collaborating partners to use VHL for decision making
- Plan workshops for stakeholder groups

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# Public Relations/Marketing and Outreach

- Develop twice-yearly Newsletter to disseminate information, market the project and report to stakeholders
- Develop and implement communications / marketing plan
- Implement / adapt communications / marketing plan
- Conduct annual User Survey/Needs assessment
- Conduct stakeholders' sensitisation sessions and strategy review
- Collaborate with MOH to pilot access to VHL in two Public Health Facilities
- Collaborate with MOH to provide access to VHL in additional Public Health Facilities

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# The Way Forward

In the absence of a Secretariat, the TTVHL Advisory Committee undertook operational roles.

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# The Co-ordinating Unit (TTVHL Secretariat)

- provides the necessary structure to manage and implement the strategic and operational plans of the TTVHL. The Secretariat is staffed by:
- Programme Coordinator / Secretary to the NAC
- Information Technology (IT) Coordinator
- Content Coordinator
- Administrative Professional / Secretary
- \*Web Master / Web Master Services
- \*Marketing and Public Relations Officer / Services
- \* may be outsourced
- The staff would be employed by the Ministry of Health (MOH). The National Library and Information System (NALIS) would provide guidance and supervision. The MOH would enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NALIS in this regard.

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# Achievements

The TTVHL Advisory Committee achieved the following:

- Operation of a functional National Advisory Committee
- Launch of the TTVHL Website
- Creation of two WIKIs for the use of Committees
- TTVHL certified by BIREME
- Developed the National Plan for the establishment of the TTVHL
- Developed the Plan of Work 2006-2009
- Contributed to development of Cabinet Minute – regarding National Plan
- Received Cabinet approval for Secretariat
- Digitisation of a collection of materials on Diabetes

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# Support To Develop The VHL

- National and Institutional support
  - The Ministry of Health/Government of Trinidad and Tobago formally endorsed the work of the Virtual Health Library by appointing the National Advisory Committee and approving the budget for and creation of posts for the Secretariat
  - The Honourable Minister of Health launched the National Advisory Committee and the Training programme
  - The National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS) purchased the VHL server
  - The PWR PAHO offered technical cooperation and assistance
  - The UWI Medical Sciences Library provided support in planning and coordination of meetings and in the provision of Secretariat services
  - Content Committee/MSL Staff – maintained and updated website
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# Monitoring and Evaluation

- The generation of statistics will be facilitated through the acquisition of software to implement “AWStats” a technology currently employed by BIREME.
- Qualitative information could be generated from surveys and from stakeholders meetings.

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# Conclusion

## **Challenges**

- Establishment of Secretariat
- Sustainability
- Human Capital

## **Opportunities**

- Funding
  - Political Will
  - Synergies
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