

Plenary Session 3

Saturday, September 21, Room B, 11.30

## **Information to Improve Public Health Decision-Making in Brazil**

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For 35 years BIREME has been carrying out technical cooperation to strengthen and widen the flow of scientific and technical health information throughout Latin American and Caribbean countries in order to increase national capacity towards equitable access to relevant and up-to-date scientific and technical knowledge at affordable costs.

Since 1998, the cooperation framework has moved to the Internet paradigm with the building of the Virtual Health Library - VHL – as a common online platform of scientific and technical information generated in Latin American and Caribbean. The VHL operates an integrated network of health information sources in a virtual space.

This paper presents an experience on the building and operation of a cooperative Public Health information on the Virtual Health Library to improve decision-making processes in Brazil. The strategy is to promote a progressive increase on the usage of scientific information by authorities, managers, scientists and professionals related to Public Health.

The operation involves a comprehensive network of information sources led by a network of institutions, which ranges from Academy to the Government. To reach the entire Public Health communities, the VHL exploits the power of information technologies to democratize the publication and usage of information, including the development of common and appropriate methodologies to enable local Public Health communities to publish local, national and international information sources.

Although significant advances have been made, the project still faces challenges related to the contextualization of information sources around local and specific problems and users.