

Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program



Shabnam Resources Trust

Chennai, India

Shabnam Resources Trust (SRT) is developing a breastfeeding peer counseling program reaching mothers in impoverished neighborhoods in Chennai, India. They are asking for support from American lactation consultants and others with an interest in maternal-child health. The program would train women from these communities to provide breastfeeding education and support to new mothers.



Why a Breastfeeding Initiative?

According to both the World Health Organization and UNICEF, breastfeeding is critical in ensuring infant survival. This is particularly true in impoverished communities. Unfortunately, the current breastfeeding “education” that these mothers receive consists of billboards from formula companies claiming “breast is best,” and government programs that may help women initiate breastfeeding but do not provide ongoing postpartum support as described in UNICEF’s Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.

The Current Initiative

Shabnam Resources plans to train peer counselors from low-income neighborhoods in Chennai to provide education about breastfeeding to prospective mothers and provide support once these mothers have had their babies. The peer counselors will have day-to-day interactions with the mothers because they live in the same communities. Chennai is the capital of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu is the 11th largest state, with a population of approximately 75 million.

The Goal

The goal of this program is to encourage exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, and continued breastfeeding for two years in accordance with the World Health Organization's guidelines.



What We Need

This program is currently seeking funding to train peer counselors. The cost to train one peer counselor is about \$68 USD. The goal is to train at least 100 peer counselors. Training will be conducted in Tamil, the local language.

About Shabnam Resources Trust

Shabnam Resources Trust is a registered non-profit charity focusing on children's and young mothers' welfare in rural and semi-urban areas in India. Its activities also extend more broadly to the needs of children, the destitute, and senior citizens. Shabnam means the first refreshing rain after dry spell.

For Further Information

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