

Our mission at PIVOT is guided by the principle that all people have intrinsic worth and should have the chance to live healthy and productive lives. As a social justice organization working in a setting of extreme poverty and disease, our core objective is to address social inequity by advancing universal access to quality healthcare. Following the WHO framework for Health System Strengthening, we work with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to improve existing facilities and provide health care services at the community, health center, and hospital levels in Ifanadiana District, which we hope can serve as a model for the country. We promote implementation research of interest to the Ministry that can inform health programs or produce data for replicating and scaling-up of the model. In addition, we recognize that human health outcomes are the consequence of complex relationships between socio-economic and environmental factors, and therefore embrace a holistic understanding of human health that reinforces a broader agenda for conservation and sustainable development. We support scientific research on underlying social, economic, and environmental drivers of disease if they have potential for materially advancing the social justice mission of the organization.

Implementation Research

The purpose of implementation research is to directly improve health care delivery programs and to provide data useful for replicating or scaling the model. A focus of most implementation research projects will be testing effectiveness of PIVOT/MoH health programs. While we have medical knowledge and technologies to address most of the causes of morbidity and mortality in the catchment population, many open questions remain about how to implement and deliver best practice. Our implementation research projects will include small-scale specific interventions as well as broader level questions at the commune or district-level. Examples of implementation research questions include: incentivizing quality health care delivery through performance-based financing; measuring effectiveness of training programs for medical staff (e.g., MESH); rigorous methods for identifying vulnerable patients; measuring effects of removing financial or geographic barriers; evaluating effectiveness of malnutrition programs; testing models of community health worker compensation; and much more. Additionally, a core objective will be to measure effects of the healthcare model on the entire population, such as changes in mortality rates, measures of disease burden, or economic outcomes. The utility of implementation research projects for healthcare providers or policymakers should be clear at the outset.

Basic Scientific Research

Health outcomes are a manifestation of complex relationships among social, economic, and environmental drivers that, together, comprise some of most pressing challenges for the 21st century: the persistence of extreme poverty and endemic disease, recurrent threats of disease emergence, and the loss of biodiversity. The ecological context of the region in which we operate presents particularly special opportunities for exploring drivers of disease at the human-environment interface. We deliver healthcare to a population along the border of the Ranomafana National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and we partner closely with Centre ValBio of Stony Brook University, a biological research station with an infectious disease laboratory. Many infectious diseases, which are the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the district, have critical stages outside of the human host, in insect-vectors or free-living stages in soils or water. These include endemic pathogens, such as malaria, diarrheal pathogens, and soil-transmitted helminthes, as well as emerging or episodic diseases, such as plague. Research on the effects of ecological processes on disease dynamics or emergence, human health and poverty more broadly is welcome. Additionally, innovative research projects on topics not mentioned above will be given every consideration.

Research Proposals:

PIVOT approves research projects based on the following considerations: a) alignment with the social justice mission; b) priorities of the Ministry of Health; c) engagement with Malagasy nationals, d) capacity building, and e) catalytic potential.