COPASAH (Community of Practitioners on Accountability and Social Action in Health) had a significant presence at the Fourth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (GSHSR), 2016 convened from November 14-18 at the Vancouver Convention Centre, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

COPASAH’s activities and endeavours were shared in different capacities at the symposium with an array of public health researchers, academicians, human rights activists, public health specialists, accountability practitioners, funders, policy makers, public health students and a range of civil society networks. COPASAH praxis and perspective of citizen unfolded in the symposium through anchoring of COPASAH organized sessions; COPASAH satellite sessions in addition to showcasing of COPASAH supported short film under the multi-media sessions and a vibrant COPASAH booth in the market place. COPASAH members also made oral presentations and poster presentations in their individual capacities at the symposium.

COPASAH SATELLITE SESSION
Engaging practitioners and researchers in the development of action-oriented research agendas for citizen-led accountability in health systems
November 15, 2016; 13:30-12:00 Meeting Room: 13 Vancouver Convention Centre

In the track of satellite sessions COPASAH registered its presence on November 15, with a session under the theme of Engaging practitioners and researchers in the development of a common research agenda. Anchored by Walter G Flores, COPASAH Steering Committee member (Center for the Study of Equity and Governance in Health Systems, Guatemala), the session saw accountability practitioners, researchers and academicians elucidate how citizen-led accountability initiatives contribute to health system responsiveness. Marta Schaaf, Averting Maternal Death and Disability Program at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health discussed the use of ICT’s for tracking maternal deaths in the state of Uttar Pradesh India. COPASAH Steering Committee member, Abhay Shukla deliberated upon the citizen led initiatives undertaken in Maharashtra in India. Alison from CEGSS shared citizen led accountability experiences in Guatemala on the use of community ethnography. Analysis of citizen led accountability using a framework of realist evaluation shared by a faculty member.
from Umea University, Sweden led to vibrant discussion on the understanding the power dynamics and the challenges in citizen led accountability initiatives.
MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION:

Shattered Stories of Death, Denial and Discrimination

Produced by VijayaKumar Seethappa with support from COPASAH

November 17, 2016; 11:00-12:30; Meeting Room: Ballroom -C, Vancouver Convention Centre

COPASAH supported short film Shattered –Stories of Death, Denial and Discrimination developed by VijayaKumar S, Janarogya Chaluvali illustrated the testimony from Village Nakunddi, district Raichur of Karnataka (India) about the denial of health services in public health hospitals through the tale of TB patient who lies unattended in the hospital and is not examined by the health care providers.

The short film garnered interest from researchers, film makers, media activists on the health rights violations and denials of health services.
COPASAH ORGANISED SESSION:

COPASAH as a global collaborative partnership of public health accountability practitioners for engaging with and strengthening health systems for increasing access to health services

November 18, Friday, 10:30–12:00, Room: 13, Vancouver Convention Centre

COPASAH organized session on November 18, outlined the theme of COPASAH as a global collaborative partnership of public health accountability practitioners for engaging with and strengthening health system for increasing access to health services.

Anchored by the COPASAH global convener Abhijit Das the session saw researchers, academicians and accountability practitioners discussing and debating on the challenges, processes and issues involved in developing and sustaining the platform of COPASAH. Experiences of building, strengthening and sustaining global collaborative platform of COPASAH and the challenges faced therein, while firmly engaging in the exercise of strengthening the health system were also shared in the session. The session witnessed sharing of the need for informed and mobilized citizen platforms to strengthen health systems and also outlined strategies and mechanisms employed at various levels - globally, regionally and in specific state contexts to facilitate effective interaction across cultural, linguistic and national boundaries. Strategies employed through multi-country (Uganda, India and Macedonia) case-studies on three specific deliberated methodologies of COPASAH were also shared in the session.

COPASAH Convener, Abhijit Das provided a historical framework of COPASAH and positioning of COPASAH in the social accountability context which was followed by a discussion on community dimensions of accountability and the key elements.
Prof. Jonathan Fox from the Accountability Research Centre, School of International Service, and American University presented a theoretical framework of the social accountability. COPASAH Steering Committee member, Renu Khanna shared experiences of community use of ICTs for social accountability from India. The approach of building COPASAH platform through accountability workshops in East Southern Africa (ESA) region was shared by Geoffrey Opio Atim from Uganda. Borjan Pavlovski from Macedonia highlighted upon the exchange visits among practitioners within and across countries in COPASAH as strategy to forge solidarity and facilitate mutual learning.

COPASAH STALL AT HSR MARKET PLACE - BOOTH # 18
Vancouver Convention Centre, Nov 15-18

COPASAH had its vibrant presence at the Market place in the Symposium at booth number 18. In the stall COPASAH Knowledge Products including Issue Papers and Cases Studies, COPASAH editions of COPASAH Communiqué along Photo- posters and other publications were showcased. The vibrant stall also was a space for relationship building for COPASAH besides a space for sharing and distributing its knowledge products. Researchers, civil society networks from different parts of the globe interacted and held discussions on COPASAH in the market place.
COPASAH Booth at the HSR Marketplace
COPASAH POSTER

Bridging divides for better health care: Building Community Leaders Capacities in Innovative Use of Information Communication Technology to Facilitate Communication between Health Systems and communities enhancing responsiveness

A poster reflecting COPASAH’s initiative in South Asia (India) of using accessible Information Communication Technology (ICTs) innovatively to bridge the divides to facilitate quicker and efficient communication for meeting the community health needs and for prioritizing in health planning gathered interest in the market place at the HSR Symposium. The poster developed by the COPASAH Secretariat team, described the initiative of ICT use across six locations of India, starting with capacity building of 30 community leaders which was carried on for a period of one year. The community leaders were already using technology such as cell phones and basic cameras. They were given technical training in three rounds on producing digital evidence, presentation, multiple ways of use of data on maternal health, nutrition, functioning of health centres and denial of health rights of manual scavengers. Subsequently, community leaders discussed the use of accessible technology within their community and with community members collectively chose a theme and used technology to generate evidence. Photo documented evidences, on gaps and situation in the health systems were collated, reviewed and shortlisted in collaboration with community members and were used for interface with concerned health officials and committees related to grievance redresses through public health dialogues at different levels of health systems. With multiple rounds of interactions between health care providers and communities, drew attention of authorities prompting them to problem solving action and use of accessible technology elicited keen interest of community, better engagement of providers, timely emergency care, and feedback was taken for better planning.

The poster generated an interest from visitors in the marketplace and many researchers, civil society actors were keen on knowing more about the use of ICT for social accountability.
A Visitor seeking information on COPASAH Poster from COPASAH Secretariat team member