

# **Artful Integrators Award 2006**

## The Health Information Systems Programme (HISP)

The Artful Integrators Award is intended to recognize outstanding achievement in the area of participatory design of information and communications technologies. Where traditional design awards have gone to individual designers and/or singular objects, the Artful Integrators Award emphasizes the importance of collaborative participation in design, and a view of good design as the effective alignment of diverse collections of people, practices and artifacts. The Award is given to a group of people who together have worked out, in an exceptionally creative way, a new and useful configuration of artifacts and practices. While no single element of the design may be particularly extraordinary in itself, the combination of design process and outcome will be.

The 2006 Artful Integrators Award goes to the *Health Information Systems Programme (HISP)*, an extensive, on-going international collaboration in health information systems for public health and higher education. HISP comprises a network of related systems development projects, as well as a dual international Masters Programme in Information Systems and Public Health of the Informatics and Medical faculties of the University of Oslo, Norway and the University of Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique, with additional collaborations including the University of the Western Cape, South Africa and the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. More than two dozen international and Norwegian doctoral and masters students participate in this programme as teachers, trainers, mentors and advisors for and with health care personnel, as well as pursuing their own research. The open source HISP software development and implementation collaboration now extends to a growing network of countries including India, China, Malawi, and Vietnam.

The people engaged in this North-South/South-South information and communication technology design collaboration have a strongly shared concern with healthcare as fundamental to human development. HISP is committed to cultivating locally grounded cultures of ‘information for action’ in public health at the district health level, seen as the strategic base for primary health care. The aim of the HISP country projects is to move fast and expansively but in a sustainable way, to develop software iteratively through globally distributed rapid prototyping and localization, and to enhance the capacities for action of the many people who engage in participatory action research and participatory design within and across country and community contexts. The programme’s methodology for contextual research, information systems and software research and development has deep roots in the principles and practices of Scandinavian participatory design and participatory action research, which are in turn being extended and adapted to new and very different contexts through HISP’s international collaborations.

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