

MACARTHUR

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions

Mahila SEWA Trust

Ahmedabad, India

Advocate for women, pioneer of public health, architects of a more just society

Mahila SEWA Trust has advocated for, and served, the women of Gujarat's informal sector for thirty years.

Organizing India's most vulnerable people, you have built a powerful movement of more than a million women. Where the need for healthcare and a social safety net is urgent, often desperate, you have found practical ways to save the lives of mothers and children, bring medical treatment to people in deep poverty, and design new systems to empower and serve them.

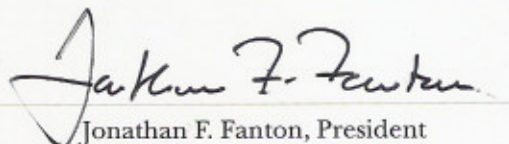
In the Ahmedabad district of Gujarat, you have trained Traditional Birth Attendants for more than 200 villages, educating, diagnosing, referring, and overseeing safe home deliveries. Reducing the scourge of maternal mortality, you save lives, serve children, and rescue families from deep distress or disintegration.

Your health insurance initiative has brought increased security and better care to 16,000 women workers and their families, spreading steadily across your state and sparking similar programs in five more. The power of your example has prompted India's Labour Ministry to develop social security programs, with health insurance for workers in the informal economy in four states. And you work toward universal provision through the goal of an All-India Women's Co-operative owned and managed by and for women.

The breadth of your ambition, the depth of your compassion, and the astute common-sense of your programs are changing the social landscape of the subcontinent.

For your practical engagement with the poor and vulnerable, your devotion to improving the lives of India's women and their families, and your expansive vision of health and social justice, we are proud to confer on you the MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions.

June 11, 2009



Jonathan F. Fanton, President