

# A Conceptual Framework for Enhancing Organ Donation in Trinidad and Tobago

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## Abstract

This manuscript presents the Multifaceted Health Promotion Model, developed to enhance organ donation rates in Trinidad and Tobago through a structured and holistic approach. The model is anchored in three primary pillars: Awareness Campaigns, Policy Advocacy, and Community Engagement. These pillars are shaped by a variety of social, cultural, healthcare, and legal factors that influence organ donation decisions. The goal of the model is to increase donor registration, improve transplant success rates, and ensure long-term health benefits for recipients. By addressing the multifaceted challenges surrounding organ donation, this model offers a comprehensive framework to enhance the effectiveness of organ donation initiatives in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Keywords:** Organ Donation, Health Promotion Model, Trinidad and Tobago

## Introduction

The Multifaceted Health Promotion Model aims to address the persistent shortage of organ donors in Trinidad and Tobago by employing a structured and holistic approach that engages key social, cultural, healthcare, and legal factors. Organ transplantation, a critical life-saving intervention, continues to be challenged by a shortage of available donors (Saidi & Hejazii Kenari, 2014). The reasons for this shortage are complex, including socio-cultural attitudes, misconceptions about organ donation, limited public awareness, and inadequate policy frameworks (Olawade et al., 2025). This model has been developed as a strategic response to overcome these barriers and improve the national organ transplant system. The model is built upon three interrelated pillars: Awareness Campaigns, Policy Advocacy, and Community Engagement. Each of these pillars is designed to target specific aspects of the organ donation process, addressing the root causes of donor shortages and fostering a supportive environment for increased organ donation. By integrating these elements, the model not only aims to increase donor registration but also seeks to improve transplant success rates and ensure long-term health benefits for transplant recipients. Awareness campaigns focus on educating the public about the importance of organ donation, dispelling myths, and promoting the benefits of donation. Policy advocacy seeks to influence governmental and institutional policies to create a more supportive legal and healthcare framework for organ donation. Community engagement is a cornerstone of the model, as it involves actively involving local communities in dialogue and action surrounding organ donation (Basu et al., 2021; Olawade et al., 2025). Research has shown that the combination of these three pillars can significantly improve organ donation rates and transplant outcomes (Mohammed et al., 2021). This model represents a comprehensive framework for

enhancing the organ donation system in Trinidad and Tobago, aiming to not only increase the number of registered donors but also to improve the overall success and sustainability of organ transplantation initiatives.

The Multifaceted Health Promotion Model is designed to enhance organ donation rates in Trinidad and Tobago through a structured, holistic approach (Figure1). Organ transplantation is a life-saving intervention, yet donor shortages persist due to various social, cultural, healthcare, and legal barriers (Olawade et al., 2025). This model addresses these challenges through three primary pillars: Awareness Campaigns, Policy Advocacy, and Community Engagement, each working collectively to increase donor registration, improve transplant success, and ensure long-term health benefits. Organ transplantation is a critical medical intervention that saves lives, yet donor shortages remain a persistent challenge in Trinidad and Tobago (Mohammed et al., 2021). This model addresses the barriers to organ donation through targeted awareness, policy reforms, and active community involvement. By integrating key influencing factors, this structured approach seeks to transform the national organ transplant network.

### **Core Pillars of the Model**

The Multifaceted Health Promotion Model is underpinned by three core pillars, Awareness Campaigns, Policy Advocacy, and Community Engagement which work synergistically to address the barriers that hinder organ donation in Trinidad and Tobago. These pillars aim to enhance donor registration, improve transplant success rates, and foster long-term sustainability within the organ donation system. Each pillar targets specific aspects of the organ donation process and contributes to a holistic approach to health promotion.

#### **A. Awareness Campaigns**

Awareness Campaigns are designed to educate the public about the life-saving benefits of organ donation, while addressing and dispelling the prevalent myths and misconceptions that surround the topic. Public misconceptions, such as the belief that doctors may not try as hard to save the lives of organ donors, often prevent individuals from registering as donors. Public education is a key strategy to overcome these barriers, and media outreach plays a crucial role in disseminating accurate, accessible information. Television, radio, and social media platforms are effective tools to reach broad audiences, ensuring that messages about the importance of organ donation are visible and frequent (Meena et al., 2023). Incorporating organ donation discussions into patient care routines and school curricula can help normalize the topic early in life. Educating children and young adults about organ donation creates an environment in which donation is viewed as an accepted and valuable act within society. Schools, in particular, represent a powerful setting for reaching future generations and cultivating a sense of social responsibility.

Personal stories from transplant recipients and donor families can further humanize the impact of organ donation, offering a relatable narrative that resonates with the public. These emotional stories create deeper connections with the topic and make the decision to donate feel more personal and meaningful. By sharing lived experiences, both recipients and donor families demonstrate how donation saves lives, helping potential donors feel more informed and empowered to make decisions about their own involvement.

#### **B. Policy Advocacy**

Policy Advocacy seeks to improve the legal and ethical frameworks surrounding organ donation and transplantation, making the process more accessible and standardized. Simplifying the donor registration

process is a critical step toward encouraging voluntary participation. Efforts to reduce bureaucratic barriers and enhance the ease with which individuals can sign up to be organ donors will increase donor registration rates. Additionally, national guidelines for organ donation help to establish ethical and transparent transplant procedures, ensuring that organs are allocated fairly and equitably (Bishnoi, 2024). Government support is integral to advancing the organ donation system. Public funding for transplant programs enables the expansion of healthcare infrastructure, research, and patient assistance initiatives, all of which are essential for improving transplant success rates and patient outcomes. It also ensures that the burden of organ donation is not placed solely on individuals but supported by a robust healthcare system. Effective policy advocacy can also lead to the development of a legal framework that encourages donations through opt-out systems or presumed consent, where individuals are considered donors unless they specifically choose to opt out. Healthcare professionals play a pivotal role in policy advocacy by normalizing organ donation discussions during routine medical care. When doctors and nurses regularly include organ donation as part of patient care conversations, it becomes a standard consideration within healthcare, rather than an isolated or controversial issue. By providing clear, compassionate, and informed advice about organ donation, healthcare providers help to foster a culture in which donation is regarded as a natural and ethical choice (Olawade et al., 2025; Timar et al., 2021).

### C. Community Engagement

Community Engagement is an essential element of building trust and acceptance within society regarding organ donation. Cultural and religious beliefs can significantly impact individuals' willingness to consider donation, and addressing these concerns through thoughtful dialogue is vital. Religious leaders and cultural advocates can play a crucial role in framing organ donation within the context of their communities' values, helping to alleviate moral or spiritual objections (Hattab et al., 2025). By promoting organ donation through trusted community figures, these initiatives can overcome the cultural barriers that hinder participation. Additionally, community engagement efforts extend beyond individual education to include workplace programs, partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and support groups for donor families and transplant recipients. Workplace-based initiatives, such as seminars, informational sessions, and donation registration drives, create a convenient and supportive environment for employees to learn about and sign up for organ donation. By integrating donation efforts into professional settings, employers can demonstrate their commitment to supporting organ donation and encourage employees to consider becoming donors. Support groups for donor families and transplant recipients are crucial in fostering emotional and psychological well-being. These groups provide a space for individuals to share experiences, receive support, and gain a sense of solidarity. They also serve as advocates for the cause, helping to spread awareness and reduce stigma associated with organ donation. Open dialogues and community events are critical to addressing misinformation and fear about organ donation. Public forums, community meetings, and informational fairs provide opportunities for individuals to ask questions, share concerns, and engage directly with experts. By creating spaces for transparent and open conversation, these events help to dispel fears, reduce uncertainty, and build a more informed and receptive public.

Overall, Community Engagement emphasizes a holistic, grassroots approach, where local communities are empowered to take ownership of the organ donation initiative. This inclusive, participatory model is essential in fostering a culture of organ donation and ensuring that it becomes an integral part of society's values and practices.

### **3. Key Influencing Factors**

Several key factors influence public attitudes toward organ donation, shaping how individuals and communities perceive and engage with the practice. These factors can either facilitate or hinder the willingness of individuals to participate in organ donation, and understanding them is crucial for developing effective interventions. The primary influencing factors include social and cultural influences, healthcare system factors, and legal and policy considerations.

#### **A. Social & Cultural Factors**

Social and cultural factors significantly impact the acceptance and participation in organ donation. Religious beliefs are often a central element in shaping individual attitudes toward donation, as many people may perceive organ donation through the lens of their religious teachings and moral values. Some religions may encourage donation as a selfless act of kindness, while others may have concerns about bodily integrity after death or views on the sanctity of the body. It is essential to address these religious concerns by engaging with community and religious leaders to provide accurate information that aligns with various belief systems, helping to overcome misconceptions about organ donation (Bolotov et al., 2025).

Family consent dynamics also play a critical role in organ donation decisions. In many cultures, organ donation is seen as a family matter, with decisions being made by the family members of the deceased, often under emotional duress. The lack of clear prior consent or the reluctance of family members to approve donation can significantly reduce the number of available organs. Thus, educating families and encouraging individuals to make their wishes known while alive can help mitigate family disputes and ensure that the potential for organ donation is not lost due to uncertainty at the time of death. Societal norms surrounding death also influence how organ donation is viewed. In some societies, death is considered a more private or taboo subject, and discussions about posthumous donation may be avoided. By normalizing conversations about death and organ donation within communities whether through media, education systems, or healthcare providers it is possible to create a more open, accepting attitude toward organ donation. Finally, trust in the healthcare system plays a crucial role in the willingness of individuals to register as donors. People who lack confidence in healthcare providers or perceive the healthcare system as corrupt may be more hesitant to engage in organ donation, fearing exploitation or malpractice. Ensuring transparency, accountability, and clear communication within the healthcare system is essential for building public trust and encouraging greater participation in organ donation.

#### **B. Healthcare System Factors**

The healthcare system plays a central role in facilitating organ donation through its infrastructure, efficiency, and ability to respond to donor needs. The availability of transplant facilities is a key factor in determining whether or not organ donation will be successful. Without adequately equipped transplant centers, the organs collected may not be usable, limiting the overall success rate of organ donations. Inadequate facilities can discourage individuals from donating, as they may perceive the process as inefficient or ineffective (Bunnik, 2023).

The efficiency of the national donor registry is another crucial factor. A well-managed registry that is accessible, up-to-date, and easy to use is necessary to ensure that donor information is properly recorded and can be matched with potential recipients in a timely manner. A cumbersome or outdated registry can cause delays in organ allocation, diminishing the perceived reliability of the organ donation system. Additionally, inefficiencies in organ distribution may lead to frustration among both potential donors and recipients, undermining public confidence in the system. Financial implications are also significant in

shaping healthcare-related attitudes toward organ donation. The costs associated with transplant surgery, post-transplant care, and long-term medical follow-up can be prohibitive for some families. Without financial assistance or insurance coverage, individuals may be less likely to consider organ donation due to concerns about the potential financial burden it could place on their families or the healthcare system. Addressing the financial barriers to transplantation through government subsidies, insurance reforms, or patient assistance programs is critical to ensuring that organ donation is accessible to all individuals, regardless of their financial situation.

Ethical considerations in organ allocation also affect how individuals perceive the fairness of the organ donation system. Public concerns about who receives donated organs and on what basis they are allocated such as prioritizing certain patient groups over others, can contribute to skepticism or reluctance to donate. Establishing clear, transparent, and equitable allocation criteria, guided by ethical principles, is essential for building public trust and ensuring that organ donation is seen as a fair and just practice.

### **C. Legal & Policy Factors**

Legal and policy factors are foundational to the regulatory framework that governs organ donation and transplantation. These factors shape how organ donation is structured, how donors' rights are protected, and the role of the government in supporting and overseeing organ donation programs. National laws regarding consent for organ donation whether opting in or opting out—can directly impact the number of registered organ donors. Some countries have implemented presumed consent laws, where individuals are automatically considered organ donors unless they opt out, which has been shown to increase donation rates. Conversely, opt-in systems, where individuals must actively register, may result in lower rates of organ donation unless coupled with effective public education and awareness campaigns.

The rights of potential organ donors and their families must be legally safeguarded throughout the donation process. Legislation should protect donors from exploitation and ensure that their wishes are respected. Additionally, the legal framework should address concerns related to the distribution of organs, ensuring that the process is fair, transparent, and based on medical need rather than financial or social status. Government involvement in funding and oversight is crucial for the sustainability and success of organ donation programs. Adequate funding ensures that organ transplantation services, research, and infrastructure are well-supported. Government agencies must also provide oversight to ensure that organ donation practices adhere to ethical and legal standards, preventing malpractice or unethical behavior within the system. Policy reforms that make the donation process simpler, more accessible, and more transparent can significantly increase the number of registered organ donors and help ensure that the organ donation system operates efficiently and equitably (Lewis & Gardiner, 2023; Walton et al., 2023). Addressing these key legal and policy factors in a comprehensive, cohesive manner is essential for creating an environment where organ donation is viewed as a common, accepted practice, thus increasing overall donation rates and improving outcomes for transplant recipients.

### **Desired Outcomes**

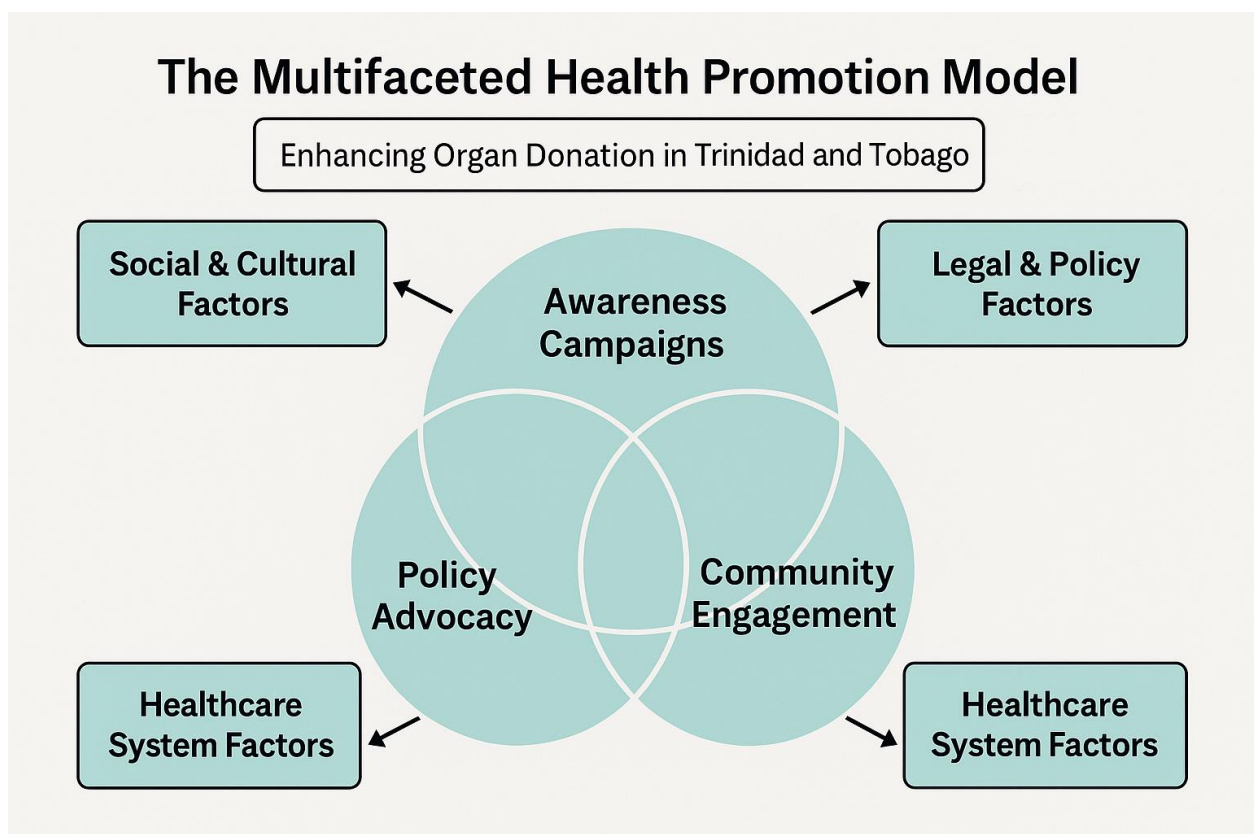
Implementing the Multifaceted Health Promotion Model in Trinidad and Tobago aims to achieve several key outcomes: increased donor registration, improved transplant success rates, and a stronger healthcare infrastructure. By focusing on Awareness Campaigns, Policy Advocacy, and Community Engagement, the model seeks to normalize organ donation, simplify registration processes, and build public trust. Through awareness campaigns, simplified registration processes, and community involvement, the model aims to significantly boost donor registration. Educational initiatives, media outreach, and religious leader



support will help reduce cultural barriers, encouraging more individuals to register as organ donors (Etheredge, 2021). With more donors, the model ensures better organ matches, reducing transplant waiting times and improving success rates. Additionally, strengthening healthcare infrastructure and training for transplant teams will increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for transplant recipients. The model also focuses on improving the national donor registry, expanding transplant facilities, and ensuring sufficient funding and resources for organ donation programs. This will lead to a more efficient, equitable system, ensuring timely transplants for all patients in need. By strengthening policies and increasing public awareness, the model seeks to establish a sustainable and ethically sound organ donation system. This will ensure that the system is transparent, equitable, and culturally sensitive, ultimately saving lives and improving healthcare in Trinidad and Tobago.

## Conclusion

The Multifaceted Health Promotion Model offers a comprehensive strategy for improving organ donation rates in Trinidad and Tobago by addressing key influences such as social, cultural, healthcare, and legal factors. This model aims to create a supportive environment where organ donation is seen as a societal norm, reducing barriers and misconceptions surrounding it. By implementing sustained awareness campaigns, advocating for policy enhancements, and fostering active community engagement, the model seeks to transform public attitudes toward organ donation, promote informed decision-making, and streamline the donation process. With these efforts, Trinidad and Tobago can establish a strong, well-functioning organ transplant network that not only saves lives but also contributes to improved public health outcomes across the nation.



**Figure 1 The Multifaceted Health Promotion Model**

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