Family planning champions: Harnessing the innovative advocate

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Presentation outline

Rationale for engaging champions
What is a champion?
How can you identify a champion?
Types of support for champion initiatives
FHI experiences
Recommendations and lessons learned
Questions for further consideration
Rationale for engaging champions

“The new idea either finds a champion or dies.” (Schon, 1963)

Programs utilizing champion strategies:

USAID Health Policy Initiative
USAID BRIDGE Project
WHO Partnership for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health
HIV/AIDS behavior change programs

What is a champion: Definition

**Champion:**
A charismatic advocate of a belief, practice, program, policy and/or technology
A militant advocate or defender

**Opinion Leader:** An expert or peer within a network that frequently influences others’ attitudes or behaviors in informal ways

**Change Agent:** Individual who links a change agency and the client system; assists client system through process of change

What is a champion: Spheres of influence

**Types of champions:**
- Political leader
- Government or NGO staff
- Healthcare provider
- Grassroots advocate
- Religious leader
- Celebrity
- Other

**Levels of change:**
- Transnational or International (global or regional)
- National
- Sub-national
- Local/community
How can you identify a champion?

**Self-identification/Self-selection**: Individuals asked to report own level of leadership or to nominate themselves

**Observation**: Independent observer identifies opinion leaders within a network

**Informant**: Members of network are asked to identify those who acts as principle sources of influence

**Sociometric**: Members of a network complete questionnaire to identify influential colleagues

**Staff Selection and Positional approach**: Staff members select opinion leaders based on observation and/or based on the individuals’ organizational roles.


Types of support for champions

- **Material support** (stipends or other incentives)
- **Process support** (capacity building)
- **Content support** (technical assistance)
- **Social support** (champion networks or supportive organizations)
FHI’s experiences

Transnational/regional:
International Network of Champions (Two phases, eight countries)

National:
Champions for Community-Based Distribution (Uganda)
Network of FP/HIV Champions (South Africa)

Local:
Champion training-of-trainer workshops
Objective:
To promote awareness and utilization of reproductive health research findings through partnerships with local stakeholders such as health professionals, policymakers, and advocacy groups

Phase I: Multiple topics
Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, Pakistan, India and Ethiopia

Phase II: Family planning & HIV/AIDS integration
Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia
International Network of Champions

**Inputs**
- Willing individuals who meet the criteria
- Supporting organization (FHI)
- Funding (annual stipend)

**Processes (activities)**
- Champion recruitment and orientation
- Strategic, tailored workplan activities
- Active and sustained networking

**Outputs**
- Awareness among decision-makers
- Policy, program, and practice changes
- Professional network(s)
- Support for sustained or scaled up activities solicited

**Outcomes/Impact**
- Improved policies and programs with regard to family planning & HIV/AIDS integration

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International Network of Champions

Sample “Menu” of Champion Activities

Needs assessments
Advocacy
Stakeholder engagement
Training(s)
Dissemination
Community mobilization
Media outreach and communications development
Technical assistance
Nigeria: Advocacy for policymakers and providers; provider training; national-level strategic planning

Tanzania: Community needs assessment; provider trainings; initiation of integrated service provision with M&E

Uganda: Rapid assessment; advocacy workshops; IEC & protocol development; policy change

Zambia: Needs assessment; provider trainings; post-intervention assessment and advocacy
International Network of Champions

Key accomplishments:

Uganda: A postpartum FP protocol was developed, field tested, and approved for the National Minimum Package for PMTCT Services

Nigeria: Advocacy led to inclusion of FP considerations in National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework

Tanzania: Twenty RH clinics are now offering integrated FP/HIV services

Multi-country: TOT workshops to build sustainability and leverage current momentum
Recommendations and lessons learned

Levels of influence can vary and have impact limits

Champion efforts require significant stakeholder engagement

Material support can play a key role

Strategies to prevent or address burnout are needed
Questions for further consideration

Can you ‘develop’ a champion?

Can public health champions be ‘re-purposed’?

Are champion initiatives cost-effective?

Which champion models work the best, and under which circumstances? For example, is establishing and maintaining networks an effective component of champion initiatives?
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