Working from Within: Creating the Capacity for Research on Family Planning Programs in a Local Research Institution

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Presentation Outline.

• Background
• Capacity Building efforts
• Lesson learned
• Conclusion
Background.

- Much of Family planning (FP) programs in developing countries is conducted by international organizations.

- Involving national institutions in FP research could have lots of benefits.
In Tanzania ...

- FP is not listed as priority topic for maternal health research in the Tanzania National Health Research System 2006-2010

- Few National health institutions study FP issues.
Why in-country organisations are preferred?

- Regulations
- Norms and Local context
- Cost effective

Locally generated FP Research and RU sustainability
PROGRESS Capacity Building

- The Program Research for Strengthening Services (PROGRESS)

- FHI 360 - 5 year project funded by USAID

- Seeks to contribute to improved FP service delivery

- Leveraging the existing resources
Case study of Tanzania

- PROGRESS consulted 3 local institutions for capacity building needs

- National Institute for Medical Research – Muhimbili Medical Research Center (NIMR - MMRC) was identified for capacity building efforts.
ABOUT FHI 360

• International public health and development Organisation
• Since 1971 have worked in 125 different countries
• MISSION : To improve the lives of the world’s most vulnerable people in lasting ways.
• Our work is global in scale yet country-focused
About NIMR MMRC.

• A government research institution.
• Mandated to generate scientific information in the country.
• The largest local health research institution in Tanzania
• Oversees all regulatory issues on health research in the country.
• An institutional member of the MOH’s technical committee
Capacity Building Efforts.

GOAL:
• To strengthen the NIMR-MMRC ability to generate FP evidence-based, practical solutions for the advancement of family planning policy and services

Intended outcomes:
• Pursue FP-related programmatic research opportunities
• Develop and implement appropriate studies to address FP issues
• Produce, disseminate and facilitate use of results that will facilitate FP program improvements
Operational principles:

• Institutional research capacity building
• Prioritize knowledge and skill application
• Foster mutually reinforcing capacity building activities based on existing expertise and experiences between NIMR-MMRC and RCHS.
Process for Capacity Building:

Self-analysis of NIMR-MMRC SWOT in FP research

Development of implementation plan

Strong data management

Research seminars

Pool of scientists

Practical application opportunities

Lack of comprehensive research skills.

Mentee program

Lack experience in FP area

Exposure to FP issues

No working relationship with Reproductive and Child Health Section

Technical Assistance in developing the National FP Research Agenda
Outcomes.

- Created a relationship between MOH Reproductive Health Section and NIMR-MMRC
- Participated in 3 research workshops
- Submitted to 3 FP research calls
- Participated in 4 FP studies as Principal Investigators/co investigators
- Enrolled as member of National FP Technical Working Group
- Identified 3 junior staff as mentee
- In the process of assisting RCHS to develop a national FP research agenda.
What we learned in this process...

It is crucial for researchers and Programs to work together in the efforts of improving public health services and policies.
Way Forward...

There is still more to do in the remaining 18 months to reach our goal.

MORE

• Workshops to NIMR-MMRC
• Practical opportunities
• FP technical knowledge
• Proposal writing skills
• Development of FP Research Agenda
Conclusion.

Building local research capacity ...

- Is a potential way of driving local institutions to prioritize FP research in their activities

- Is a potential strategy to ensure that RCHS is receiving sustainable technical assistance on FP research a well as research utilization.
Scientific Writing workshop to NIMR-MMR