Improving Public Health Systems in Developing Countries

Otto Nzafurundi Chabikuli, MD, MSc
Director, East and Southern Africa
To improve lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions for human development.
FHI 360: A Comprehensive Approach to Human Development

- Health
- Nutrition
- Education
- Economic Development + Livelihoods
- Civil Society + Peacebuilding
- Gender Equality
- Environment
- Technology
- Research
- Communication + Social Marketing
- Youth
FHI 360’s Global Reach

FHI 360 serves more than 60 countries, all 50 U.S. states and all U.S. territories.

Representatives of more than 110 countries travel to the United States each year as part of our International Exchange program.
Introductory observations

• Health systems are complex, differ between and within countries, and over time; continuously refined
• Not divorced from societal values, the socio-economic make up of the country
• Health systems in developing countries retain the original exogenous character
  – Uneasy co habitation with traditional healing practices
Improving health systems – how?

- First understand current status, then design strategies
  - WHO building blocks a useful framework
  - Strategies – trickle down, bottom up, parallel programs
- Cut and paste interventions from developed world rarely work sustainably
in Africa, domestic resources remain inadequate for the health systems strengthening needs.
Dealing with complexity – case of the DRC*

Katja Rohrer, Dpt of Health System Governance and Financing. 19 June 2014. WHO
Dealing with complexity – case of the Kenya*

*Katja Rohrer, Dpt of Health System Governance and Financing. 19 June 2014. WHO
Approaches to intervention design

• Improve a discrete piece of the health system: vertical approach
  – Easily measurable, changes attributable to intervention
  – Short term wins, strong body of evidence; knock on effects

• A holistic, comprehensive, integrated approach
  – Longer time frame to show system wide change
  – Resource intensive
  – Little evidence to build on
Vertical approach
Interventions targeting maternal and child health have produced significant results – 50% decline in U5 mortality rate between 1990 and 2012 in 24 USAID priority countries.

### Percentage Decline in Under-Five Mortality Rate (1990 to 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage Decline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo DR</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>24 priority countries</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNICEF analysis based on UN IGME 2013
• There are however unintended consequences

Viet Nam salaries

Cambodia salaries

• Donor practices lead to escalating distortion of salaries and poaching of resources within HIV/AIDS sector

• National programs increase salaries, resulting in major country-wide salary inflation

• “This has been phenomenally destructive.”

*Katja Rohrer, Dpt of Health System Governance and Financing. 19 June 2014. WHO
Integrated approach
Integrated development concept - not new

• Rural integrated development popular in the 1970s and 1980s
• Renewed interest post 2015-development agenda
• Intuitively appealing but weak evidence base
• Will entail addressing several HSS building blocks deliberately and simultaneously
Conclusion

• Improvement of health systems in developing countries has long history, wealth of lessons generated
• Measurement of health system is critical to demonstrating success – consensus approach and tools needed
• Significant achievements with vertical approaches to systems strengthening but unintended consequences as well
• Preventable deaths remain unacceptably high in developing countries – will the integrated approach have greater impact?
Thank you