UNICEF’s approaches to stakeholder engagement and use of research evidence to inform program and policy

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Overview of Implementation Research and Delivery Science at UNICEF

• Catalytic to achievement of results for the Global UNICEF’s strategic plan and global goals

• Knowledge units embedded in all programme sections - Health, HIV, Nutrition, Education and child protection (HQ, New York)

• Programme sections work closely with the Division of Data, Policy and Research
  • Mixed expertise on communication, implementation research, data analysis, GIS, digital health, policy and health systems
  • Work with national systems, academia and UN and external partners to build learning within programme design
Approach

• Attempts to have meaningful engagement of partners, policy makers and implementers on the ground to review programme data to define key gaps

• Allows alignment of implementation research activities to address identified programme gaps and funding priorities and cycles
  • Includes transitioning new innovations to scale

• Minimal overreliance on external consultants but rather promotes strengthening of local capacity

• Promotes development of communities of practice to assure continued sharing of lessons and learning
Integrating implementation research within the programme cycle

Baseline → Programme implementation → Monitoring Evaluation → Problems identified → Known solution → Unknown problem or solution → Implementation research → Management issue → Programme changes made → Evaluation (endline/impact)
Modalities for engaging stakeholders

Global convening – UN Governance and global partnerships
- Virtual learning platform and community of practice
- High level face to face meetings
- Policy briefs
- Engaging key partners and donors

Regional convening – Partner coalitions and regional platforms
- Sharing through face to face regional meetings
- Virtual platforms
- Regional frameworks
- South to south exchange
- Joint stakeholder missions

Country stewardship – National Technical Working Groups/Coordination
- Supporting and leveraging national coordination platforms
- National consultations

Policy and practice changes resulting in improved programme performance
Engaging stakeholders on emerging knowledge / lessons learnt to accelerate achievement of eMTCT targets through a global virtual learning platform

- Launched in 2010 by UNICEF and WHO in support of the Global Plan to eliminate new infections in children.
- A virtual learning collaborative to coordinate, synthesize and share best practices and new science with partners and country practitioners.
- Manned by one dedicated staff.
- Used various modalities – webinars featuring public health officials and researchers to present various cases and new knowledge.
- Virtual case discussions with implementers to shape programming approaches.
- This platform now expanded into other areas of work eg Global Fund supported implementers for prevention in adolescent girls and young women;
Translating knowledge into action through a virtual learning platform

- >50,000 website users
- 4,000+ community of practice (COP) members from > 100 countries
- 65% growth in COP from 2014-2018
- 80% of respondents rated webinars as good or very good and 13% rated the quality as excellent.
- 40% of website users are from the African region, and 40% of community of practice members are from low-middle income countries.
- 17% are from UN agencies, 12% are from NGOs, 4% are government representatives, 4% are from academic or research institutions.
- Most respondents (81%) find the resources shared useful, with the majority recommending the website, COP or both to colleagues (86%) in 2015.
Engaging stakeholders on optimizing programming for the last mile of eMTCT

Source of new infections among children newly infected...how do we optimize investments towards elimination

- With UNAIDS, spectrum epidemic projection data files updated to determine sources of new child HIV infections
- Virtual regional reviews of data generated with country teams
- Discussions with the Global Fund to influence investment decisions based on the analytics
- Technical consultation on solutions held at CROI 2019
- Key programming options to be developed based on these discussions

Source: UNAIDS special analysis of 2018 estimates
Strengthening community facility linkages: UNICEF led initiative to optimize HIV treatment of pregnant women in 4 countries

- Launched as part of a grant provided by Sweden and Norway to UNICEF
- Cocreation phase with implementing partners to align investments
- Structured engagement of community actors
- Review of community best practices and development of a framework for the different activities
- Allowing different actors to self select and define implementation approach in response to various uptake and retention challenges
- Documented best practices shared locally and at national level to inform future investments

**Programmatic actions:**
- Community Mentor Mothers
- Community Client Tracing
- Social Accountability
- Male Involvement
- Rationalization of Services
Thank You