



Training in the Use of Data for Decision Making Improves Kenya's Health System

Key Points

- The adaptation and development of a manual to teach Kenya's health program managers how to collect and use data is a significant achievement of FHI's CRTU cooperative agreement with the USAID.
- Evidence-based data is crucial to making timely and relevant decisions.
- *Data for Decision Making* training modules are in use by NASCOP and Kenya MOH's DRH.

Summary of findings: Kenya needs accurate, comprehensive data for the development, implementation, and evaluation of reproductive health (RH) programs at all levels. To this end, Kenya's Ministry of Health (MOH, now the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation [MOPHS]) and FHI's Kenya office began a systematic capacity-building program. This program adapted an existing tool, the *Data for Decision Making* module, to train program officers to collect, analyze, and use data effectively. The first training of trainers was held in June 2005. Over the next five years, the trainers used the module to educate 479 MOH professionals from all regions in Kenya. During that period, the module was continuously revised and polished as trainers and MOH staff worked with the material. In addition, FHI-Kenya, in partnership with the National AIDS and STI Control Programme (NASCOP), developed a version of the module to address the specific needs of HIV/AIDS program managers.

FHI-Kenya delivered final texts of the modules to the MOPHS in January 2010. The MOPHS will print copies of the modules as needed when new trainings are scheduled.

Background

Program development, implementation, and evaluation require the collection and analysis of representative data from the population of interest. In Kenya, the reporting rate for RH service statistics in 2000 was only 17 percent.¹

Furthermore, most of the submitted reports were late, incomplete, and largely inaccurate. Thus, RH programs were created, implemented, and administered often with only minimal data to measure their effectiveness. Opportunities to reduce duplication of efforts or to realize efficiencies of scale were scant.

These problems led administrators of MOH's Division of Reproductive Health (DRH) to request FHI-Kenya's help to improve the capture, synthesis, and use of data at local, regional, and national levels. Funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Contraceptive and Reproductive Health Technologies Research and Utilization (CRTU) cooperative agreement with FHI supported the collaboration.

Development of the module

The first step in the program was to adapt a manual that FHI had developed for use in Ethiopia. That tool had successfully guided

Ethiopian program staff in the collection, reporting, analysis, and application of high-quality, standardized data.

The DRH and FHI-Kenya sought research results and tools from other organizations, such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Population Reference Bureau (PRB), to bolster the new manual with pertinent and useful supporting documents. Trainers used feedback from trainers, trainees, and staff members from the DRH and the Department of Health Management Information Systems (DHIS, also within the MOH), to develop and refine the manual after many training sessions.

The revised manual covers the rationale for basing decisions on data, the tools for using data effectively, and examples of decisions that require data. All content is oriented specifically to the health management systems in place within the MOH.

Training sessions using the module

The weeklong training of trainers (TOT) session was held in June 2005. During this course, 23 program officers from seven Kenyan provinces were trained to prepare for the rollout of the *Data for Decision Making* training module at the provincial, regional, and district

Training in the Use of Data for Decision Making Improves Kenya's Health System

levels. Feedback from post-course evaluations was used to make more improvements, both to the manual and the training workshop.

Next, the trainers conducted five-day workshops on aspects of RH data management at sites nationwide. Those who attended the workshops were DRH coordinators, district and regional provincial AIDS and STI control officers, district and provincial health records and information officers, and district public health nurses.

Assessments were conducted before and after each workshop to gauge the participants' knowledge and to measure the program's effectiveness as an educational and motivational tool.

Key achievements

The *Data for Decision Making* training module has contributed significantly to the capacity of MOH officers to collect and use data to make informed, timely decisions.

Scope

From May 2006 to October 2009, 245 district and regional program personnel were trained in aspects of RH data management during eight workshop sessions. The workshop forums taught both users and generators of RH data to address the challenges that they face in collecting, analyzing, presenting, and using data for program management. The training provided useful examples, including case studies when relevant. It was organized to allow trainers quick access to information that responded directly to the needs and interests of trainees. The *Data for Decision Making* module was particularly useful for a new cadre of RH managers that the MOPHS had put in place at the district level, and also for district health records and information officers.

In post-training evaluations, participants said that the training improved their knowledge and skills significantly. Many were especially appreciative of the experiential approach to learning offered by the workshops' interactive methods, group projects, and practical exercises. They also praised the workshops for providing orientation to the DRH's District Health Information system, data management tools, and the DRH Web site.

Building capacity

With its user-friendly and thorough approach, the manual informs data collectors and users about complexities in the collection, analysis, and application of timely, accurate, and reliable data. The manual has become a standard reference, and other groups are adapting it for their own needs. For example, in August 2009, the NASCOP adapted the manual to the HIV/AIDS environment, training 211 program managers in seven workshops over nine months.

In 2005, as part of the implementation of the National Health Sector Strategic Plan II (2005–2010), the MOH began requiring its district health officers to collaborate on an annual operating plan (AOP) aligned with

"The [data for decision-making] training available to our staff contributes to the development of appropriate and achievable annual operating plans. The data show us where to go." — Josephine Kibaru, M.D., head of the Department of Family Health, Kenya Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation

the national health strategic plan. AIDS, Population, and Health Integrated Assistance (APHIA) II, a bilateral partnership of the MOH and USAID, hosts conferences for the district health managers to facilitate collaboration on the authorship of this plan. The training has enhanced the AOP process, according to Josephine Kibaru, M.D., head of the MOPHS Department of Family Health, who says, "The training available to our staff contributes to the development of appropriate and achievable annual operating plans. The data show us where to go."

Finally, the *Data for Decision Making* module made it possible for the MOH to develop and implement a geographic reporting system (GRS) in collaboration with FHI-Kenya. The GRS allows the DRH to enter information that is relayed from the field, which is then uploaded to a Web-based system that displays the data on a map of Kenya. With the GRS, DRH administrators can click locations of interest and assess capacity and needs at a glance.

Collaboration

Development and implementation of the training module would have been impossible without the involvement of many partners: USAID, CDC, PRB, and DHIS, among others. Management Sciences for Health (MSH), a nongovernmental organization with a long history of providing technical assistance to strengthen health management systems, facilitated and funded some of the training sessions. MSH staff worked closely with the MOH to strengthen the module's logistics and management component and to implement the workshops.

Reference

- 1 Utilizing Data for Decision-Making in Kenya Workshops Report, September 2006.



This work is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Family Health International and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government. Financial assistance was provided by USAID under the terms of Cooperative Agreement No. GPO-A-00-05-00022-0, the Contraceptive and Reproductive Health Technologies Research and Utilization (CRTU) Program.