

The need for strengthening management/workforce performance at district level

In Ghana, we need health workers with relevant skill mix to improve health workforce performance in order to achieve Universal Health Coverage. Managers at district level are being supported to improve annual planning and implementation in the devolved structure of service delivery. They also need a simple and sustainable way of improving workforce performance management and the relevant management competencies such as leadership, planning and performance appraisal.

The PERFORM management strengthening intervention

The PERFORM initiative developed a management strengthening intervention (MSI) and tested it with District Health Management Teams (DHMT) in Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania

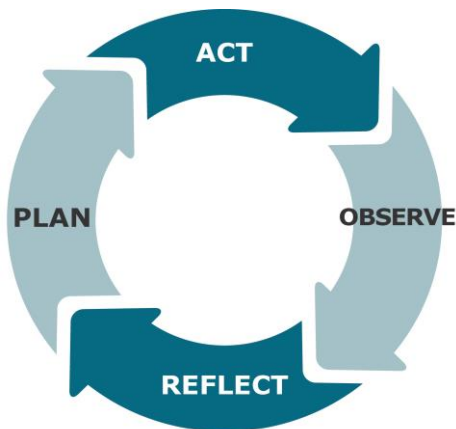


Figure 1: the action research cycle

from 2012-14. The MSI used an *action research* approach (see Figure 1) to enable the teams to analyse their own problems related to workforce performance and develop appropriate workplans (**plan**); implement the workplans (**act**) and learn about management from the experience (**observe** and **reflect**). The MSI was facilitated by national research teams in each country through meetings, short workshops (Figure 2) and joint meetings of DHMTs, and follow-up support. The teams tackled problems such as poor supervision, absenteeism and ineffective staff appraisal systems. They developed integrated strategies to be included in

the annual district plans, largely using available resources. The evaluation of the MSI showed that it helped to strengthen management for health workforce performance. Some strategies were even attributed to improving service delivery. For example, in Ghana, improved supervision of Community Health Officers led to better record-keeping and immunization defaulter tracing, and ultimately reduced drop-out rates and higher vaccination coverage. The MSI was also convenient for the DHMTs – fitting in with their busy schedules – and promoted collaboration both within the district team and between district teams. DHMTs wanted the use of the MSI to continue and suggested that the approach should be expanded to more districts.



Figure 2: Problem analysis by a DHMT in Ghana

Expansion/Scaling-up the PERFORM MSI

To increase the impact of the MSI on strengthening district-level management and improving health workforce performance, it needs to be implemented both continuously (Figure 3) and at scale. This project, which will also be conducted in Malawi and Uganda, seeks to increase learning across different contexts. The aim of the five-year PERFORM2scale initiative is to develop and validate a costed national scale-up process for the MSI. The expansion/scale-up strategy includes working with government and other employers, and relevant stakeholders to integrate the initiative into existing national level management structures to sustain the implementation of the MSI at district level in Ghana.

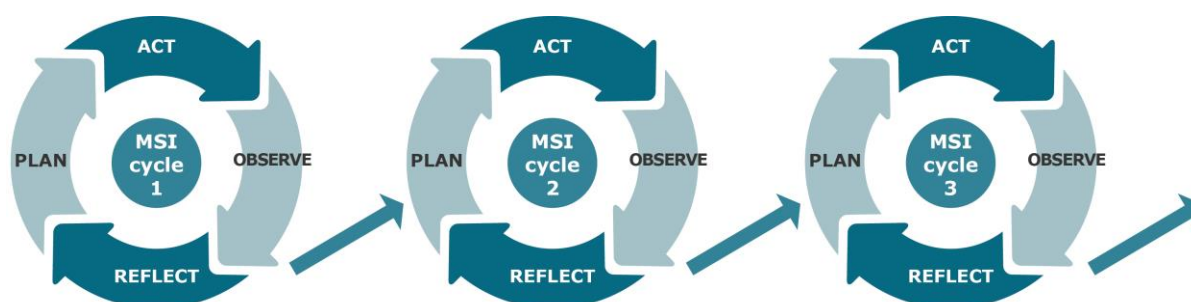


Figure 3: The MSI cycle will help DHMTs to solve problems and gradually improve their management competencies

What's happening next?

In the inception year we are (1) establishing the National Scale-up group (NSSG) and Resource Team (RT); (2) selecting the first District Group (DG1) consisting of 3 districts. In **Year 2** we will conduct (1) Orientation visits and MSI cycle plan development (2) carry out the MSI cycle (i.e. initial situation analysis and problem analysis by DHMTs, workshops to plan MSI and develop human resource (HR) and health system (HS) strategies work plan and implementation of the plans). In **Year 3** the MSI cycle will continue in DG1 and a new cycle with start in DG2. In **Year 4** the MSI cycles will continue in DG1 and DG2 and a new cycle with start in DG4. During this period the NSSG and RT will take increasing responsibility for organising scale-up and facilitation of the MSIs and will manage the planning and implementation for existing and new cycles in **Year 5**. The research component of PERFORM2scale will be managed by the School of Public Health, starting with an Initial Context Analysis study in Year 1 and including process and outcome evaluation – including costing in Year 2-4 and concluding in Year 5.

Read More:

Browse the website
www.perform2scale.org

Follow us on Twitter
[@PERFORM2scale](https://twitter.com/PERFORM2scale)

Contact us at School of Public Health, University of Ghana:

Moses Aikins (mksaikins@ug.edu.gh)

Patricia Akweongo (pakweongo@ug.edu.gh)

Samuel Amon (samamonzygote@gmail.com)