

PERFORM2Scale - strengthening workforce performance at the district level

We need more health workers but also better health workforce performance to achieve Universal Health Coverage. The district is a key level for making those improvements, particularly in decentralised contexts where managers have greater opportunities for decision making. PERFORM2Scale is a simple and sustainable way of improving workforce performance management and the relevant management competencies.

The PERFORM management strengthening intervention

PERFORM2Scale is based on the success of the PERFORM initiative which in 2012-14 developed and tested a management strengthening intervention (MSI) with District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) in Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania. The MSI used an action research approach (see fig 1) to enable the teams to analyse their own workforce performance problems and develop appropriate workplans (**plan**); implement the workplans (**act**) and learn about management from the experience (**observe** and **reflect**).

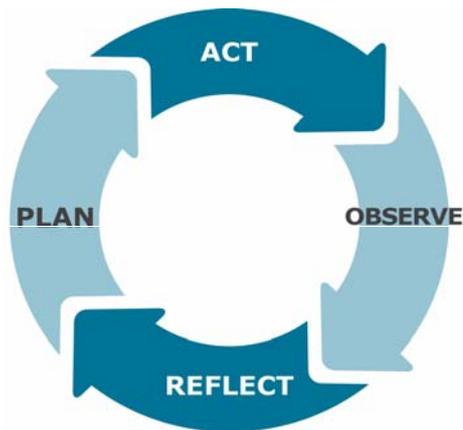


Fig 1. The action research cycle

Some strategies were even attributed to improved service delivery. For example, in Ghana, improved supervision of Community Health Officers led to better record keeping and defaulter tracing and ultimately higher vaccination coverage and reduced drop-out rates. The MSI was also convenient for the DHMTs, fitting in with their busy schedules, and promoted exchange and mutual learning both within and across between district teams. DHMTs wanted the use of the MSI to continue and suggested that the districts.

A toolkit was developed to enable the use of the MSI in other contexts (see www.performconsortium.com/action-research-toolkit/).

The MSI was facilitated by national research teams in each country through district visits, short workshops and joint meetings of DHMTs, and follow-up support. The DHMTs tackled problems such as poor supervision, high absenteeism and ineffective staff appraisal systems. They developed integrated strategies and workplans 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.

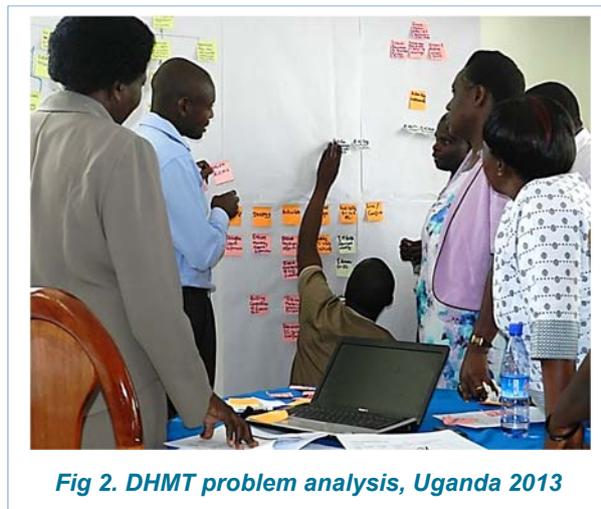


Fig 2. DHMT problem analysis, Uganda 2013

What PERFORM participants said...

“PERFORM... made us aware that even when there are no funds something can be done and it is important to monitor and strategise on progress.” (DHMT member, Ghana)

“Before we used to wait a long time for change, but the action research cycle has shown us that we can push change.” (Health Manager, Tanzania)

“What I can say is that absenteeism rates have dropped, and these days people value their work.” (Health Manager, Uganda)

Scaling-up PERFORM to PERFORM2Scale

To increase the effects of the MSI on strengthening district-level management and improving health workforce performance, it needs to be implemented continuously and at scale. The purpose of the five-year PERFORM2Scale initiative (2017-21), working in Ghana, Malawi and Uganda, is to develop and validate a national scale-up process for the MSI. The plan is to increase the number of MSI cycles for each DHMT to deepen their learning and to increase the number of participating DHMTs. The scale-up strategy includes working with governments, non-government employers and other stakeholders to develop plans and networks to sustain the implementation and expansion of the MSI at district level.

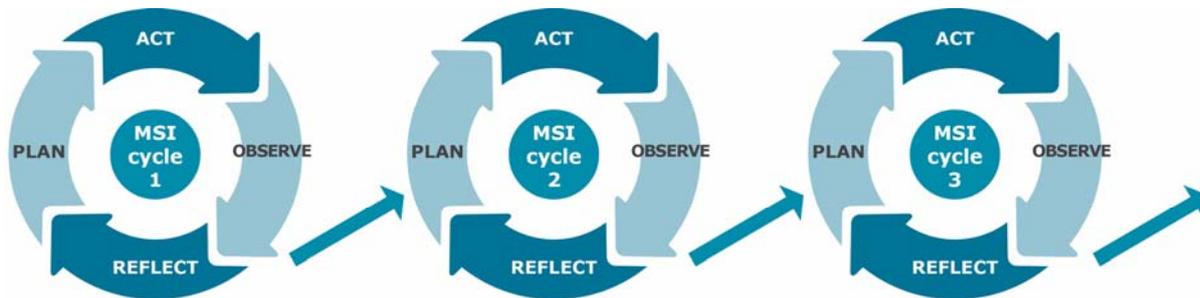


Figure 3: The ongoing MSI cycles will help DHMTs to better address workforce performance problems

What's happening now?

Since the beginning of 2018 we have been working on the following:

- Developing the research tools to study both the management strengthening and scale-up processes (see separate briefing note). A baseline study has been carried out. Data collection in place for process and outcome evaluation.
- The MSI cycle has started in three districts in each country and DHMTs are starting to implement plans they have developed.
- The initial stages of scale-up are taking place in slightly different ways in each country, providing useful lessons for future planning.

Find out more

Go to www.perform2scale.org

We're also on Twitter [@PERFORM2scale](https://twitter.com/PERFORM2scale)

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