

Lessons Learned From An Evaluation Of A Five-year Capacity Strengthening Strategy Supporting The Implementation And Scale Up Of A Management Strengthening Intervention In Ghana, Uganda, And Malawi.

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PERFORM2SCALE RESEARCH STUDY

PERFORM2Scale (P2S) was a five-year (2017-2022), seven-country, international research consortium, dedicated to scaling up a management strengthening intervention (MSI) approach together with district health managers across 27 districts in across Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda.

To ensure all consortium members were supported and facilitated to enact their respective roles and strengthen necessary competencies related to MSI implementation and scale up, a capacity strengthening strategy was intentionally embedded within the methodological and theoretical infrastructure of P2S.

Here, we present the findings of an evaluation of this P2S capacity strengthening strategy.

PERFORM2SCALE

IMPROVING HEALTH WORKFORCE PERFORMANCE

EVALUATION OF A CAPACITY STRENGTHENING STRATEGY



CAPACITY STRENGTHENING STRATEGY

The Capacity Strengthening Strategy for P2S following five-step model for planning, collecting information, making decisions, and improving performance for capacity strengthening (Bates et al., 2014):

1. **Define** the goal of the capacity strengthening project;
2. **Describe** the required capacity needed to achieve the goal
3. **Determine** the existing capacity and identify any gaps compared to the required capacity;
4. **Devise and implement** an action plan to fill the gaps;
5. **Learn through doing**; adapt the plan and indicators regularly.

AIM

The evaluation of PERFORM2Scale's capacity strengthening strategy was designed as a sub-study within PERFORM2Scales overarching research programme. Its primary aims were to:

- 1) determine the effectiveness and acceptability of the strategy for all stakeholder groups involved in P2S and;
- 2) elucidate key learnings from implementing and experiencing the strategy

In other words, we sought to answer the question: **Whether and, if so, how capacity was strengthened across the lifespan of PERFORM2Scale?**



METHOD



- Documentary Review
- Project Reports
- Minutes of Meetings & Workshops



- One-to One Interviews
- Representatives from each of the seven consortium partners



- Focus Groups
- Members of the Country Research Teams in Uganda, Ghana, & Malawi

FINDINGS

FOUR OVERARCHING LEARNINGS

- 1 The importance of fostering a shared, consortia-wide consensus on how capacity strengthening should be distinctly outlined and collaboratively operationalised for health research programmes similar to P2S
- 2 Ensuring a multidirectional approach to the implementation of capacity strengthening activities and equity in partnerships is paramount
- 3 Identifying capacity needs and tailoring of capacity strengthening activities must be done on a responsive and iterative basis, engaging people in ways that are contextually relevant
- 4 Relational and in-person strategies to develop capacity strengthening must be facilitated

"Maybe there was a need to redefine what we mean by capacity strengthening [within the consortium]. I mean it's one of these terms but what do we actually mean by it.

I think as much as we try to support remotely I think it calls in to question how equal these relationships ended up being and I wonder if maybe there is a better way of doing that in the future

Because there was a turnover within the consortium maybe it would have been better to kind of try to constantly check in on okay what systems we have, what strength do we have now because those were like shifted into six months' time



CONCLUSIONS

With humility, both the strengths *and* limitations of the capacity strengthening strategy are openly shared with the view that it is through such transparency that the necessary constructive learnings for the future practice of all health systems researchers can be found. Instead of focusing solely on 'what went right' or 'what went wrong', we encourage fellow researchers who aim to embed capacity strengthening approaches within their research programmes to simultaneously query **'how can we do better'**.

For more information contact us on:
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