Health Systems 20/20 and Organizational Capacity Building

The Challenge

The unprecedented level of funds flowing into the global health sector has highlighted the lack of country capacity to address health system constraints. Key national governmental actors such as ministries of health and national AIDS commissions do not have the organizational and management capacity to provide direction, align activities with national strategies and plans, and execute their assigned functions. In addition, many developing countries lack qualified local sources of technical assistance and training and are therefore dependent on international sources. Research institutions lack the operational and financial autonomy, business skills, and research capacity needed to carry out studies and analyses to inform policy and health system strengthening.

The Health Systems 20/20 Approach

Health Systems 20/20 is working to strengthen regional- and national-level organizations that are essential to strengthening health systems − governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, academic and research institutions, consulting firms, and others.

Health Systems 20/20 uses a "whole of system" approach, developing capacity in the full range of organizational competencies essential to a sustainable and effective organization. The project's conceptual framework for capacity building comprises six core organizational competencies:

- *Technical expertise:* Is the organization able to access tools and methodologies and does it have a technically qualified workforce?
- *Resource mobilization:* Can the organization mobilize resources and be financially viable?
- *Coordination:* Can the organization coordinate the activities of its partners or members around a common vision and plan?
- *Management systems:* Does the organization have management systems to function effectively in areas such as financial management, procurement, information technology (IT), human resources, and administration?
- *Leadership and management:* Does the organization have the capacity to develop strategic and operational plans, provide effective leadership and management, build an effective team, and create a structure with clear roles and responsibilities?

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- *Governance:* Is there a governance system that provides the necessary checks and balances?

The approach draws from the best practices of organizational development – it starts with an assessment to identify needs based on the core competencies, then develops and implements an intervention plan, constantly monitors progress and makes mid-course adjustments, and ends with an explicit plan to sustain the improvements. To build ownership and commitment, the approach is client centered.

Applying Our Approach

Capacity-building interventions targeted at the core competencies include strategic planning, leadership, and management training; mentoring and coaching; building coordination capacity; development of key management systems such as financial management and IT; business planning; team building; technical training; and strengthening the effectiveness of boards of directors.

> *"We are a different institution than we were two years ago. There is now a common vision, energy, and collective thinking that plays out in decisions people make."*
>
> Patrick Kayembe, Director,
> Kinshasa School of Public Health,
> Democratic Republic of Congo

- Building the capacity of six regional institutions in Africa to serve as institutional homes for three health systems strengthening methodologies:
  - o For National Health Accounts (NHA): *Centre Africain d'Etudes Supérieures* en Gestion in Senegal and the East, Central and Southern African Health Community in Tanzania
  - o For Health Systems Assessment (HSA): Regional School of Public Health in Benin and Makerere School of Public Health in Uganda
  - o For the HIV/AIDS Program Sustainability Analysis Tool (HAPSAT): Institute of Health and Development in Senegal and the Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Department in South Africa.

- Strengthening the African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET), a rapidly growing regional organization of schools of public health that offers field epidemiology and laboratory training programs. In the past four years, AFENET's staff has grown from three to 29 and its annual revenues from $750,000 to $10 million. Health Systems 20/20 assistance has focused on providing a foundation from which to manage this growth through interventions such as developing a strategic plan, strengthening financial management capacity and resource mobilization capacity, improving the team effectiveness of the secretariat, revising the governance structure, and developing a human resources plan.

- Strengthening the institutional capacity of the Kinshasa School of Public Health by expanding and strengthening the leadership team, upgrading the financial management system, establishing the IT infrastructure for a local network and reliable Internet access, improving resource mobilization capacity, revising the academic program, and developing the next generation of young faculty through a mentoring program. This activity, now in its third year, has had a noticeable impact on the school.

- Establishing a permanent secretariat for the Liberia National AIDS Commission which previously only occasionally consisted of a steering committee that met periodically. The secretariat now has eight full-time staff members, a staffing plan with defined roles and responsibilities, dedicated office space, an operating budget, a performance management system, and a work plan that is being implemented.

- Designing and implementing a country ownership approach to strengthen the national health information system in Nigeria. This involves establishing a coordination secretariat within the Nigerian national health management information system to generate increased political will, strengthen leadership, align donor activities, create demand for health information, and build capacity at all levels.

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