



USAID'S HEALTH EVALUATION AND APPLIED RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT (HEARD) PROJECT

Accelerating research-to-use in maternal and child health through the Implementation Science Collaborative

The purpose of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Health Evaluation and Applied Research Development (HEARD) Project is to undertake research efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving USAID's global health and development goals, including Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Death (EPCMD), achieving an AIDS-Free Generation (AFG) and Protecting Communities from Infectious Diseases Initiatives, including the Global Health Security Agenda. The HEARD Project will focus on evaluative and targeted research that accelerates research-to-use processes through two types of research activities:

- Multidisciplinary applied and implementation research activities that accelerate the research-to-use process focusing on targeted questions, barriers, and bottlenecks related to high priority interventions, technologies, policies and products that show promise or are ready for scale-up.
- Evaluative research and post-marketing surveillance of pilot programs and at-scale tools, technologies, interventions and policies that address the causes of maternal, child and neonatal deaths and morbidity.

THE CHALLENGE

Expanding capacities and the use of implementation science for evidence-informed policy and program decision making has long been a priority for USAID. A major outcome of the HEARD project will support the development of a global health Implementation Science Collaborative (ISC) to address three major challenges:

- The disconnects between research conducted, data use, and service delivery improvement;
- The lack of focus on understanding program implementation (design, processes, impact) which makes it difficult to inform program improvement and policy processes and apply evidence across different contexts; and
- The lack of understanding and prioritization of how research can be translated into practice and policy and its potential to develop and refine interventions and technologies that benefit communities worldwide.

RESEARCH SYSTEMS INTEGRATOR & PROJECT MANAGER

University Research Co., LLC

GLOBAL TECHNICAL ANCHORS

University of California, San Francisco and University of California, Berkeley Institute for Global Health Delivery and Diplomacy (IGHDD)

Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy at the City University of New York

SUB-REGIONAL ANCHOR PARTNERS

West African Health Organization

Infectious Diseases Institute

Ifakara Health Institute

James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University

University of Indonesia

TECHNICAL RESOURCE PARTNERS

Implementation Assistance Providers

CARE

World Vision

Pathfinder

Americares

Project Concern International (PCI)

Global Alliance to Prevent Prematurity and Stillbirth (GAPPS)

Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF)

Evidence Advocates

Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves

White Ribbon Alliance

Africa Academy for Public Health (AAPH)

East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC)

Partners in Population and Development (PPD)

Centre for Health Sciences Training, Research and Development (CHESTRAD)

Evaluation and Research Institutions

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

University of Bordeaux Institute for Public Health, Epidemiology, and Development (ISPED)

Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal)

University of Oslo, Department of Informatics

Makerere University

Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS)

Universitas Gadjah Mada

Indiana University/AMPATH

Columbia University/Averting Maternal Death and Disability (AMDD)

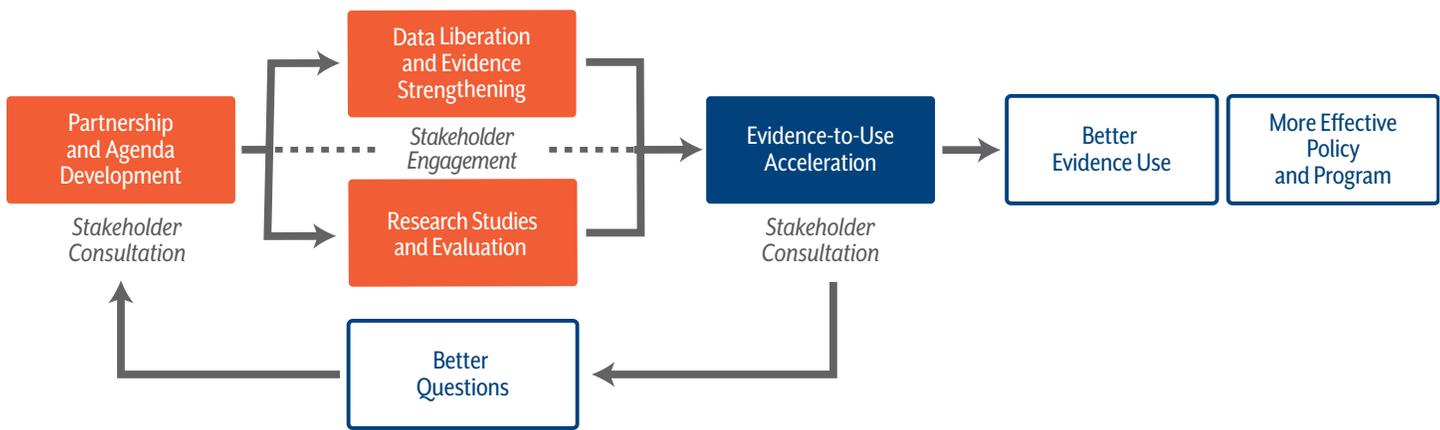
Population Council

Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health

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APPROACH

The ISC is comprised of organizations that work to advance global health goals such as implementation support organizations, regional health governance bodies, policy advocacy groups, civil society based evidence advocates, research organizations and academic institutions. This strategic mix of partners will help to inform which research questions are prioritized in different contexts; to generate and analyze evidence; and to better package and move evidence through channels making it more accessible to inform policy and practice.

Emphasizing effective stakeholder engagement and knowledge management throughout, the four main strategies of The Collaborative are: (1) partnership and agenda development; (2) data liberation and evidence strengthening; (3) research and evaluation study design and implementation; and (4) the acceleration of evidence-to-use processes.

The Collaborative will seek to:

- ▶ Effectively respond to evaluation and research-to-use global health priorities: developing study designs and issue-specific partnerships required to navigate a complex effort along a strategic research-to-use pathway;
- ▶ Actively engage national, regional, and global-level stakeholders for the development of those priorities: engaging and supporting a growing community of interested implementers, policy makers, and investigators in shaping and promoting a more relevant research-to-use agenda and capacity; and
- ▶ Strengthen and connect the institutional applied research capacities required to sustain a vigorous implementation science agenda in support of global health goals, emerging threats and new opportunities.

THEMATIC AREAS

The Implementation Science Collaborative will focus its efforts across five initial thematic areas. These are:

Urban Health: Understanding the policies and programs required to address the immediate and long-term health needs of a rapidly urbanizing world and the urban poor is an urgent priority of current development work. The ISC will

explore critical issues and promising interventions for children and adolescents who are among the urban poor. Initial work in this area will focus on water and sanitation as well as nutrition needs of this community. Recognizing the dynamic nature of urban environments including social, economic, and health systems challenges, the approaches in this area will be multi-sectoral.

Community Health and Human Resources for Health: Community health systems provide the first point of contact for preventive and curative health services for families and communities. Optimizing the role of frontline health workers to the varying contexts in which they operate is a key component to improving access to appropriate, timely, and quality care, and to building resilient health systems. The ISC will identify and examine priority implementation science questions related to community health and the health workforce.

Incentivizing Quality Delivery of Services and Commodities: Many low- and middle-income countries are working to incentivize the quality of delivery of health services and commodities, including through performance-based financing strategies and public health supply chain system reforms. The ISC will seek to elaborate and address the next generation of implementation questions in this area by building evidence on how to better measure and achieve quality improvement, how to leverage these fields to support scale-up of high-impact practices, and how to adapt implementation by context, at the community-level and in urban settings.

Woman-centered Care: Ensuring respectful environments for both clients and providers of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (and related) services is a complex challenge. It involves understanding and addressing societal, health system, and individual factors. Building on the ground-breaking respectful maternity care work and related initiatives, the ISC will support research-to-use activities that inform implementation and scale-up of efforts to advance woman-centered care.

Global Health Innovations and Security: The aim of the global health innovations and security thematic area is to advance cutting-edge thinking and implementation of innovative products, practices, and policies. The ISC's work in this area could include involvement in clinical trials, the testing of new technologies, the testing and scale-up of new medicines or combination therapies, or providing other critical inputs into the research-to-use pathway.