Harnessing the Power of Digital Health
Key Points from an Interactive Discussion at ICFP

Sherri Haas, mHealth Technical Officer

African Strategies for Health (ASH) Project

Management Sciences for Health

Presentation Outline

- Digital Technology for Family Planning
- Session Background
- Discussion Session Overview

- Highlighted points from Key Issues
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    - Interoperability
    - Planning for Cost of Digital Tech
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Expansion of Digital Technology for Family Planning

Digital technology and the expansion of access to mobile phones and networks presents unique opportunities for strengthening the planning, monitoring, and quality of family planning services and for improving access to care.

Digital Health applications are being used in a range of ways to increase access to family planning and reproductive health services including:
- Health Communication – increasing access to information by voice and text through programs including MAMA and Mobile 4 Reproductive Health
- Health Care Worker Support and Training - enabling greater connection between CHWs and supervisors as well as clients; watching and sharing videos, as well as using phone-based protocols to provide counseling.
- Supply Chain Management – Programs such as eLMIS and the Informed Push Model use mobile technology in gathering data to track family planning commodities and send alerts to stock imbalances.

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Session Background

The USAID Africa Bureau, and their project African Strategies for Health (ASH), have contributed to the generation of knowledge and facilitation of discussion around opportunities for digital technology to address key health challenges including equitable access to family planning services.

This session built on AFR/ASH/GH/Lab collaboration including support for regional meetings on mobile and digital health and the creation of the mHealth Compendium series. Design with the recognition that the digital health field has matured beyond basic pilots to needing in-depth discussions of how to plan for growth and scale in integrating technology to family planning and other programing.

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HARNESSING THE POWER OF DIGITAL HEALTH
LESSONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS

Digital technology presents unique opportunities for strengthening the planning, monitoring, and quality of health services and for improving access to care.

Join us to learn from promising and proven mobile health (mHealth) approaches in family planning, discuss current challenges and opportunities which could be met with digital solutions, and share your experiences and insights with mHealth applications.

ICFP | Nusa Dua, Indonesia
Wednesday, January 27 2016 | 6-7:30 pm | Legian 7

#mHealth4FP

Discussion Session Overview

Session Objective:
Interactive discussion and sharing of practical experience on some of the key issues which have emerged in implementing digital health solutions for Family Planning.

Key Issues Discussed:
- Stakeholder engagement, partnering, and program development
- Interoperability
- Cost of using mobile technologies
- Scaling up

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Key Issue: Stakeholder Engagement, Partnering, and Program Development

Collaboration is a key feature of successful implementation of digital health programing. Early and ongoing discussion has been cited by mobile network operators, governments, and implementing partners as an important factor in supporting program execution and scale up.

The problem to be solved should be kept in the forefront of discussions, and solutions developed with users in response to a specific need.

Acknowledging that individuals coming from a technology background do not necessarily have the same experience and method of operating as those in the health field.

Know the other stakeholders and active systems to reduce redundancies and increase the ability for programs to work together.

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Key Issue: Interoperability

Interoperability is the capability of health systems to communicate. It is the technical ability for these systems to understand each other's language and be able to respond.

Interoperability is key for ministries of health to receive consolidated, comprehensive, up-to-date information.

Use of open source software can facilitate interoperability with other systems. However, it also requires the knowledge and ability to customize the applications.

There is a need to train more people in the field in coding, and to partner with universities in setting up training programs.

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Key Issue: Planning for Costs of Digital Tech

Governments have a role to play in planning for and reducing costs, including setting standards, facilitating discussions with mobile network operators, and encouraging public-private partnerships.

Capacity-building activities can consume a large portion of programmatic costs, and need to be adequately planned for in program timelines.

Plan for long-term use of the tools during the development stages. Network connection and technology can improve and change rapidly, so plan for where its expected to be in coming years.

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Key Issue: Scaling Up

The [Principles for Digital Development](#) are an important starting point for any program considering integration of digital technology.

Consider technical, behavioral, organizational, and financial considerations changes in planning for scale. System requirements may change greatly between 5,000 to 500,000 users.

PPPs are an important piece of scaling up, but they require a good business case for private companies like mobile network operators to participate.

Develop the capacity of local technology partners, including through engagement with local universities.

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Key Takeaways on Digital Technology for Family Planning

Collaboration, transparency, and country commitment are important for program ownership and sustainability.

Building capacity in using data for decision-making. Real-time data are only valuable if there is the capacity to use them.

The information generated through digital systems can enable both forward planning and quick response at sub-national levels, allowing for greater targeting of key populations to address within country inequities.

Digital technology is a valuable tool for addressing challenges and improving the quality of family planning services. It opens up great opportunities for democratizing service provision.

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Thank You!

MSH Policy&Advocacy Retweeted

MSH @MSHHealthImpact · Jan 27
"Building the capacity of data use is no good if someone doesn't have access to use it." #mHealth #ICFP #ASH

MSH Policy&Advocacy @MSHACTS · Jan 27
Lilly Banda @USAIDMalawi: with access to info comes empowerment. #mHealth breaks down barriers in #familyplanning programs #ICFP #mHealth4FP

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For Additional Digital Health Resources

www.africanstrategies4health.org

ABOUT ASH

African Strategies for Health (ASH) is a five-year project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Bureau for Africa and implemented by Management Sciences for Health. ASH works to improve the health status of populations across Africa through identifying and advocating for best practices, enhancing technical capacity, and engaging African regional institutions to address health issues in a sustainable manner. ASH provides information on trends and developments on the continent to USAID and other development partners to enhance decision-making regarding investments in health.

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