

Beatriz E. Plaza, Research Associate, USAID/MEASURE Evaluation Project/ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Ramon Martinez, Health Metrics Adviser, PAHO/Health Analysis and Statistics Unit

Anwer Aqil, Senior Health Information System (HIS) Adviser, USAID MEASURE Evaluation/JSI, USA

Panel Session

C5: Knowledge for Success: Better Service through Better Information

Abstract Title

Collaborating with Latin America for Strengthening Information Systems

Keywords

partnership, health information systems, strengthening collaboration

Learning Objectives

By the end of the presentation participants should be able to: 1) list strategies for partnerships and/or collaborations; 2) articulate the different methodologies for planning and prioritizing investments to strengthen health information systems; and 3) identify factors which contribute to better performing information systems.

Partnership Model

The partnership model is based on learning from each others strengths. The countries received technical assistance and in turn shared their health information system experiences and lessons learned. **The partnership was among USAID funded MEASURE Evaluation, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the governments of Brazil, Mexico, Honduras and Paraguay.**

Background

MEASURE Evaluation and PAHO supported Mexico and Brazil to develop a working standardized framework and evidence for supporting the selection of appropriate strategies and solutions to overcome specific critical elements for improving health information systems. Brazil and Mexico were selected as their relatively well-developed information systems could provide many lessons learned for the rest of the region.

Design/Methods

Under a country driven process, a comprehensive in depth assessment of their systems was carried out using WHO/Health Metrics Network (HNM) framework and MEASURE Evaluation's Performance of Routine Information Systems Management Framework (PRISM).

Results/Outcomes

Each study took place in country carried out by the national health authorities. The total cost of each case study was \$40,000. A local implementing agency in each country carried out the

study with continuous technical assistance from partners. The Mexican and Brazilian Secretariats of Health presented their findings to key stakeholders from other countries in the Latin American region. Paraguay and Honduras also shared their results of the HMN analyses. Based on the need to improve the skills for improving the information system, a training course based on the PRISM framework was carried out in Mexico in collaboration between the institute of public health, ministry of health, MEASURE Evaluation and PAHO. Twenty-two participants from Mexico, Brazil, Paraguay, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Venezuela and Bolivia learned new strategies of self-assessment, performance improvement tools, checking data quality and improving culture of information and advocacy. This served as an opportunity to standardize assessment tools for health information systems in the region and directly transfer knowledge and lessons learned. Both Paraguay and Honduras have replicated the use of these tools.

Impact of Partnership

By creating these partnerships between PAHO and USAID / Measure Evaluation, the HMN, the Institute of public health in Mexico and ministries of health the documentation of experiences on information systems and the development of regional monitoring and evaluation strategies have been facilitated. More importantly, the South to South-created opportunities for future collaborative work and production of numerous internationally recognized standards and guidelines.
