

## Minutes of QI in Focus Phone call

Date: 04/30/2008

Time: 8:30-10:00 AM EST

**Topic of the call:** Experiences in structuring collaborative learning for quality improvement of OVC programs. The call will focus on the rationale for collaboratives and fundamentals, with discussion of experiences and lessons learned from the field. Due to the small size of the group, the call was conducted as an informal discussion facilitated by Lori DiPrete Brown.

### Participants:

Lynne Miller Franco (Facilitator and Presenter), Senior QA Advisor URC

Marie-Eve Hammink (Presenter), QA Advisor, URC

Dorcas Amolo, CARE East and Central Africa Region

Renee DeMarco, Senior Advisor, OVC Programs, USAID Africa Bureau

Dee Dee Yates, FHI Namibia

Lori DiPrete Brown, Assistant Director, Center for Global Health, U. of Wisconsin

Samantha Dovey (Note taker) Project Coordinator, URC

Justin Opoku, AED

Kate Vorley, USAID/Kenya

Jane Begala, Constella Futures

Mildred Mushunje, CRS/Zimbabwe

Jane Calder, PACT/Tanzania

Joyce, PACT/Tanzania

### First Presentation on Structuring collaborative learning for quality improvement in OVC programs by Lynne Miller Franco

What is an improvement collaborative? It's a system that brings together multiple teams working on a common improvement aim into a shared learning environment. The teams exchange their experiences in testing and implementing changes in real time enabling the rapid achievement of significant results in multiple sites.

The Rationale for collaborative learning within the context of OVC programs is that standards are just being introduced in many OVC programs and we need to be able to learn what it means to implement them and how best to implement them.

The fundamental concept of improvement is that "Every system is perfectly designed to get exactly the results it gets." Meaning that if we want to improve the system we need to implement changes, otherwise, we will continue to keep getting the same results we're getting.

Quality Improvement provides a framework for organizing and harmonizing the provision of care. It also engages people at the point of service delivery to evaluate their own performance and decide how they could organize themselves to do their jobs better.

Methods for improving Quality:

Traditional method has focused on introducing norms, job aids, inputs and supervision.

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Quality Assurance incorporates working together as a team, analysis of processes, monitoring of data, has a client focus and coaching is provided.

Improvement Collaborative is having multiple teams working on common objectives/indicators, sharing experiences, best practices, learning from each other, friendly competition, and the ability to have rapid expansion to new teams (scale up).

Elements of a collaborative related to introduction of OVC service standards:

- Shared improvement aims (generally included in the standards)
- OVC quality improvement teams at selected sites.
- Regular analysis of measured results to guide quality improvement.
- On-going support for teams while they are testing changes and monitoring results.
- Opportunities for sharing experiences, learning and results across QI teams.
- System for summarizing learning over time about standards, best practices and outcomes.

### Second presentation on the Ethiopian experience by Marie-Eve Hammink

Piloting process that is taking place is aimed at identifying how can we see if the standards are doable? How can we operationalize them? What are the best practices?

Structure of the Collaborative follows the structure of the PCCC project with three tiers: Tier 1 is the International NGOs, Tier 2 are the local NGOs and Tier 3 are the CBOs. Changes will be implemented at the point of service delivery by implementers (CBOs). There are two piloting sites in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa and learning sessions are planned to include representatives from all the tiers from both of the sites in order to maximize the lessons learned and to share experiences.

Where are we now in the process: Piloting of the Standards

- Have organized the structure and begun identification of QI teams
- Training on QI and Improvement Collaboratives
- Have engaged all partners at the 3 tiers
- In process of identifying coaches—technical specialists from both the Local and International NGOs, which will be trained in QI. Want the process to engage all levels.

An essential element of the collaborative is to have champions in the field. They had already organized the structure and forming teams by the second trip to the field.

Process will be to identify specific improvement objectives, work for two months on implementing changes and have the first learning session after the 2 months to exchange experiences. Plan on regrouping again for a learning session in September to identify best practices and see what they've learned so far.

Noted that the process and timeline is different for the two sites and that it is good to be both flexible and supportive to this implementation of the process in the two sites as everyone is starting at different levels.

QI teams are at the CBO level. Changes are implemented at the point of service delivery.

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### Mildred Mushunje on experience in Zimbabwe:

I do agree entirely with what Lynne shared that we need some kind of structured collaboration because this will definitely work towards a common basis of operation, M&E, etc by the teams that are engaged in this process. From the limited experience that I got of Ethiopia in the field--- I would say this is a very ripe country for promoting and creating a mechanism for structured collaboration. The idea of the coaches from the INGOs and the local NGOs and CBOs was received with great enthusiasm so I would think that these teams could also take a leadership role in creating a broader base to include national structures such as the OVC TaskForce in the collaboration. I would think the planned learning visits in July and September (if by this time this would not have been introduced) should also be used as a platform for the mainstreaming of structured collaboration from which we could all learn and adapt/replicate for the specific needs of our respective programmes/countries.

### Dorcas Amolo – On experience in Ethiopia

CBO's each identified a service they wanted to improve and then created an action plan. It is helpful at learning sessions with the CBOs and other to share lessons learned across the different service areas.

Coaching needs to be different based on the needs of NGOs and CBOs, because they are all at different levels.

### Marie-Eve:

Key is to identify champions at all levels to take the lead, those with the capacity to implement the collaborative.

In Ethiopia, they will be bringing in other NGOs to the learning sessions even though they are not part of the Improvement Collaborative because there is a broader commitment to improve.

The government of Ethiopia is very much on board with the Initiative. And because it is a collaborative process, it enables ongoing discussion on what the Quality standards will be. It is really a process of developing the standards based on the experiences and lessons learned from the field. These lessons will help to change and improve the draft standards.

### Q&A Session:

Q: Do the Ethiopian QI teams in the sites meet regularly?

A: Yes, they meet among themselves weekly and across teams every 2 months. They fit it into the preexisting meeting schedule to make it feasible. It is not necessarily a separate part of the meeting either—it really fits in well into the discussion because they are able to address on how to improve the process of their organization.

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Question posed to the group (by Lynne Franco): How do they think this collaborative structure would be applicable in their own environments?

A (Jane Pact TZ): Would like to incorporate the structure into the Implementing Partners Group in TZ. The Group consists of government officials, 60 organizations and 120 individuals. The group functions at a national level. Would like to see the group expand and to function additionally at both the regional and district level.

A (Marie-Eve): Reps from the OVC task force are part of the learning sessions in Ethiopia, enabling the link between implementers with policy makers.

A (Dorcas): OVC task force is also working in Kenya with the Ministry of Home Affairs and it is through the Ministry that they are organizing trainings for implementers, who will then provide training to others.

Kenya's structure really represents a top-down model. Whereas Ethiopia represents a bottom-up model since it is implementers (CBOs) at the point of service delivery that will be sharing lessons learned with NGOs, International NGOs and Policy makers at the national level. These lessons learned will serve to influence the validation of the Quality Standards.

Closing remarks:

The next call topic is reflections on experiencing collaboratives and the essential role of coaching in support of quality improvement at the service delivery level.

Webex logistics: We have begun to use Webex, an online meeting service, in addition to the teleconference line for those who would like to see the presentation at the same time as listening to the teleconference. A few people joined via Webex, while others expressed difficulty with logging into the meeting session online. We hope to work out the kinks and to have more people join via Webex in future calls.