

Quality in Focus Call Minutes
December 19th, 2008

Minutes of QI in Focus Phone call

Date: 12/19/08

Time: 8:30-10:00 AM EST

Topic: Regional Training and Exchange Event on Improving the Quality of OVC Programs:
Overview and Gathering Feedback on the Training

Participants:

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Samantha Dovey, URC

Marie-Eve Hammink, URC

Renee DeMarco, USAID

Kerry Miller, CRS

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Yegomawork Gossaye, USAID/Ethiopia

Kate Iorpenda, International AIDS Alliance

Michelle Farmer, CRS

Elizabeth Lema, USAID/TZ

Introduction: Lynne Franco

The Regional Training and Exchange Event took place on Nov. 18 -21 in Adama, Ethiopia. It was the second regional training event on QI for OVC programs. The purpose was to bring together participants who are actively engaged in OVC programming and go through strategies/methods for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of OVC programs and also provide a forum where countries can learn from one another's experiences.

There were approximately 60 participants from 16 countries at the training event.

The first training event in Tanzania in 2007 had focused on the process for developing service standards for OVC, while the second (in Ethiopia in 2008) focused on how to operationalize standards at the point of service delivery and on integrating QI into OVC programming. The four day training was framed around the "Road Map for Quality Improvement for OVC Programs," a document that guides OVC stakeholders through the essential steps to improve the quality of the services they provide.

Overall objectives of the training event were that participants:

1. Use the Road Map for QI for OVC services to identify the steps and actions that are needed as country teams to improve quality for OVC programming.
2. Name core competencies and resources needed in their country and across the range of stakeholders to successfully complete each phase of QI.
3. Engage in participatory learning sessions to increase cross learning among country participants for achieving the daily training objectives
4. Know where to access tools and materials relevant to each phase of improving quality in OVC programming and how to determine best use of these existing resources.
5. Produce updated action plans that cover next steps for the weeks and quarters following the training to meet their end of year results in QI for OVC programs and identify one focal person to follow up on the implementation of the action plan.

Each day had a specific focus:

Day 1: Introduction and History of QI, Road Map for Quality Improvement of OVC Services, and the first two phases of the Road Map – Building constituencies and commitment for quality OVC care & Defining quality: establishing consensus about service standards

Day 2: Achieving improvement of quality at the point of service delivery level (Phase 3 of the Road Map)

Day 3: Measuring Quality (at various points along the Road Map)

Day 4: Developing country action plans, African Partnership

Feedback on Training from participants:

Elizabeth Lema (participant throughout the training):

- Overall very fruitful meeting. Realized that QI is not an extra burden, but is really a way to organize our daily work to be more effective and efficient.
- Understands clearly what the concept “Quality” means = improving the lives of children
- Conducting needs assessments is very important, it would be extremely useful to develop a standardized tool for volunteers to use at the household level
- Services will be more sustainable if they focus on the household

Yegomawork Gossaye (attended first and last day and debriefed by participants):

- Shared actual experiences in OVC care and application of quality improvement
- Important to put QI on the Government Agenda
- In Ethiopia, are planning a OVC Taskforce Meeting to follow up on what came out of the training event. Will validate standards in a workshop in a few months where they are going to bring in other organizations and will produce a final national document.

Highlight from training: there was a lot of energy and enthusiasm from the participants to move the QI process forward in their individual countries.

Highlights from Day 1: Intro and History of QI, Road Map, Building Constituencies and Defining Quality

- Presented the Road Map for Quality Improvement for OVC programs, which consists of 4 major phases:
 1. ***Building constituencies and commitment for quality OVC care*** (Phase 1) – focuses on how to build QI into our programs and how to build up a partnership that works towards QI of OVC programs
 2. ***Defining Quality: Establishing consensus about service standards*** (Phase 2) – encompasses the steps to developing service standards, vetting and piloting the service standards to ensure that they are feasible and make a measurable difference in the lives of children
 3. ***Achieving Improvement of quality at the point of service delivery level*** (Phase 3) – includes communicating standards to all levels, organizing for QI at the point of service delivery level, forming QI teams and structures to support the work and setting up mechanisms for sharing within and across organizations
 4. ***Taking Stock*** (Phase 4) – involves checking progress and making necessary course corrections, this step happens at all points, not just at the end

- Ethiopian country experience presentation: discussed how they went about thinking and implementing Quality Improvement. The presentation included representatives from all the various levels involved (INGO, local NGO, CBO, Government)

Highlights from Day 2: Improving Quality

- Through a case study, participants were asked to think through what a quality service is and how to implement changes in order to improve the quality of programs at the point of service delivery level.
- Ethiopia, Tanzania and Namibia all share their experiences developing service standards, pilot testing the standards and forming “QI teams” or “learning groups/communities” in order to share learning within and across organizations.
- Ethiopia experience highlighted the important point that QI isn’t an added on burden – just a different way of organizing yourself in order to improve the quality of the services your organization provides
- There was an optional evening session on the Child Status Index. The presentation was led by Florence Nyangara from MEASURE Evaluation. It reviewed the use of the CSI and its implementation to-date.

Highlights from Day 3: Measuring Quality

- Measuring Quality takes place at various points along the Road Map – e.g. during pilot-testing of standards, measuring improvements (changes implemented), measuring processes and outcome indicators
- Example of real-life situation was presented on how measuring allows you to know you are making an improvement
- Measuring Quality starts with the development of service standards – how do you know you are meeting the essential actions
- Groups worked on a case study looking at using measurement at the point of service delivery level to know whether or not the change you implemented was an improvement
- Learning Fair – where countries/organizations shared their tools. Examples of tools shared: guides for volunteers, Household assessment tool. This fair demonstrated how organizations are committed to sharing their knowledge and tools with one another.
- Building Houses exercise – groups were asked to build houses out of a bag of supplies they were given. This exercise reinforced a number of important concepts brought out during the training: appropriate care – making a difference for children without making them different; reflection on standards; importance of sharing & cross-learning

Lessons learned:

Elizabeth Lema:

- Important to have more than one organization test the standards and even more important to figure out whether the essential actions make sense and make a difference in the lives of children.

Marie-Eve Hammink:

- In the case of Mozambique, they are planning to have 4 organizations pilot-test the standards. It is good to think through who will be involved in pilot-testing the standards before you even begin developing standards (planning in advance with help with the implementation further on)

Highlights from Day 4: Country Action Plans & African Partnership

- Each day country teams had time to sit together and discuss what they've learned during the day and begin developing action plans. During Day 4, country teams pulled together their action plans and vetted their plans with two other countries to gather input and feedback.
- The idea for forming an African Partnership for QI for OVC came out of the last Africa Regional Training event in Tanzania (Sept 07). The idea came from the felt need to establish this body of work in Africa and have a regionally based technical hub available to support OVC stakeholders & program implementers. HCI is currently playing the role of the technical hub, but the goal is to transition this hub in the next few years to Africa. HCI is now taking action and developing a transition plan.
- Over the past months, HCI has conducted background research and begun developing ideas on the mission, function and structure of what the African Partnership would look like. During the training event in Ethiopia, a sub-group of participants met each day to discuss ideas for the mission and functions of the partnership. Their ideas were presented back and vetted with the entire group on day 4.
- At the end of Day 4 there was a Gift and Request Activity, where countries were able to give each other gifts (e.g. exchange visit, share a tool) and also ask for requests from others. Additionally, each individual was asked to write down one commitment and share it with another participant, where they were asked to follow up and make sure that the other person followed through on their commitment.

Q&A

Q: How many of the countries are really following up w/other countries? How can we facilitate this exchange?

A: Countries are already engaged in exchanges, for example Tanzania and Ethiopia are planning an exchange visit. It was evident at the training event that countries were asking each other a lot of questions and seeing the importance and usefulness of exchanging lessons learned.

Q: The African Partnership sounds great, how can we encourage our partners to access this resource, and to reach out for the participants for resources, TA, etc?

A: HCI is currently the technical hub – we are just starting the process of transitioning this technical hub to Africa. HCI is a resource, as well as the www.ovcsupport.net/QI website. We encourage you to contact the people listed on the country pages for support – they are willing to provide help and support.

Comment: Would be great to ask partners what they would like form this African technical hub – in order to get more feedback and help create demand.

Q: How to strengthen the capacity of partners on QI?

A: Contact those that are part of the initiative – there are people from within your organization that were present at the training event. HCI is a resource, along with the website. We will be posting all the training materials up on the website.

Q: How often will the website be updated?

A: On a quarterly basis, please send in any documents and tools to share on the website.

Q: Do you know of any tools to assess volunteer workers, or where to find them?

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A: We encourage you to directly contact the national leads on the country pages of the ovcsupport.net website to ask them if they have any tools available to share.

Closing Remarks:

- The next QI in focus Call topic will be the Road Map for Improving Quality of OVC programs.
- The www.ovcsupport.net/QI website will be updated by late January
- Materials from the training event will be available on the website once it's been updated.