

Minutes of QI in Focus Phone call

Date: 8/21/2008

Time: 8:30-10:00 AM EST

Topic: Sharing progress to date on the QI Initiative, focusing in particular on what was presented during the HIV Implementers' Meeting in Kampala and the AIDS Conference in Mexico.

Speakers:

1. Dorcas Amolo, Regional QI Advisor for HCI
2. Joyce Kivamba, Deo Seimu and Linda Madeleka, PACT/TZ
3. Lucy Steinitz, FHI/Nambia
4. Esther Sempira, CORE Initiative/Uganda
5. Wondwossen Hailu, Save the Children/Ethiopia

Participants:

Marie-Eve Hammink, HCI
Lucy Steinitz, FHI/Namibia
Cephas Goldman, USAID/S.A.
Jane Begala, Constella Futures
Nicole Richardson, Save the Children
Wondwossen Hailu, Save the Children/Ethiopia
Angela Odiachi, USAID/Malawi
Paul Bouey, OGAC
Esther Sempira, CORE Initiative/Uganda
Lori Diprete Brown, HCI
Ochi Ibe, USAID/Nigeria
Sampson Radeny, Save the Children/Ethiopia
Waverly Rennie, URC/Tanzania
Chiho Suzuki, FHI
Samantha Dovey (Note taker) Project Coordinator, URC
Dorcas Amolo, Regional QI Advisor for OVC Programs, URC
Joyce Kivamba, PACT/TZ
Deo Seimu, PACT/TZ
Linda Madeleka, PACT/TZ
Representative from Mozambique

Note: We had a total of about 30 participants, not everyone announced themselves on the call, those who did are listed above.

Dorcas Amolo

- The Quality Improvement Initiative for OVC Programs is a new partnership that brings together USG, national governments and implementing partners in many countries to use QI approaches for establishing and applying OVC service standards.
- QI is a way to organize and harmonize the provision of care by engaging those at the point of service delivery to reflect on and improve the quality of care and services they provide.

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- What has been accomplished so far under the initiative: Facilitator's Guide to establishing service standards; support provided to implementing partners in Ethiopia, Namibia, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe to draft service standards; hosting monthly Quality in Focus Calls; a new QI section on the OVC Support Toolkit website (www.ovcsupport.net), capacity building events (Tanzania in Sept. 07; Washington DC for OVC taskforce members); support to Ethiopia and Tanzania with several implementing partners to develop learning communities.
- The ultimate goal of the initiative is to create an African based partnership for Quality in OVC Programs to promote quality in OVC programs through advocacy, capacity building, mentoring and coaching, regional sharing events and sharing of best practices.

Comment (Marie-Eve): Overall role of HCI is to provide support to Implementing and Government partners, to facilitate and strengthen the exchange and dissemination of information and best practices to those involved in the QI Initiative; in addition to capacity-building of QI for OVC programs and to tackle the very challenging question of how to measure quality of OVC services.

Joyce Kivamba, Linda Madeleka and Deo Seimu – PACT/TZ

- Emphasized the need to have quality standards in place and to be able operationalize them.
- Have already begun implementing a few different interventions in order to address the observed gaps in service standards and to improve quality of the services they provide to OVC. For example: they have recruited more volunteers and provided further training for them and decided to place a program officer in each of the regions. Before program officers were expected to cover a few regions and therefore didn't have a lot of time to meet with the volunteers to discuss the challenges/obstacles and provide them with mentoring.
- Additionally they have refined the guidelines for volunteers on the service standards, and program officers provide mentoring to the volunteers on the guidelines.
- Are currently piloting learning groups that come together to discuss gaps/barriers to obtaining the service standards, program officers provide guidance and coaching for groups.

Q&A and Comments:

Q: What were the differences seen/impact on having the implementing partners and volunteers reflecting on the guidelines?

A: They have observed a sense of ownership amongst the volunteers, which is important in maintaining sustainability. It's at the community level that they are directly addressing problems, without a lot of dependence on external donors.

Additionally, they have a different view of what constitutes providing a "service" to a child now, before it was seen as only providing commodities, whereas now there is a greater focus on providing counseling, support and to help coordinate and refer children for services.

Lastly, it has changed from being a "child-centered" focus to more of a "family-centered" focus.

Q: Does PACT/TZ have M&E tools that support quality supervision? If so, would it be possible to share those tools? What is the ratio of volunteer/children served?

A: They have a home-visit form that volunteers fill out; in addition to a form that summarizes the services. There is currently 1 volunteer/village and each volunteer serves between 20-30 OVC.

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Comment: In Namibia, the goal is to have a good assessment tool, the current tools fall short in that they do not provide enough detail and they have found that it is hard to coordinate care with this tool.

Lucy Steinitz-FHI/Namibia

- Namibia underwent an 18-month process to develop service standards for OVCs, that was a highly participatory process including input from all levels (government, IPGs, youth).
- It has been challenging communicating and implementing the service standards. It is seen as an “add-on” effort for organizations. It has been hard to implement them especially within already existing organizations.
- They have formed collaboratives, which consist of representatives from 3-4 NGOs that provide the same service. To start the process, they came together and reflected on which service standards apply to their programs, then came up with a checklist on how to implement them. They then went back to work with their programs, observe and review whether the standards were being met. Then regrouped to address how their programs fall short of the standards and what improvements could be made.
- Partners were very excited about the collaboratives, but it was essential that they had a champion to push the idea forward and the funds to support transportation costs.
- Until QI becomes a reportable item, it will remain as “add-on” effort for organizations and faces the threat of “fizzling out.” In order for it to become institutionalized, it needs to be pushed from the outside (donors, government)—needs to be motivated.
- The standards are being used by organizations in program planning, even though it is not a requirement from USAID—demonstrating really that it is really at the grassroots level.

Q&A and Comments:

Q: Can you provide more information on what is going on currently with the learning groups in Tanzania?

A: The learning groups are made up of representatives from the MVC Committees, volunteers, partners and guardians. They meet to discuss barriers/challenges to implementing service guidelines and come up with a simple plan to make improvements that the groups then go back to the community and implement. This process is highlighted, since the goal is to want them to own the process.

Comment (Lucy Steinitz): All implementing partners need to have the commitment and an allocation of resources and time to do quality improvement. There needs to be a restructuring done to include QI.

Comment (Marie-Eve): With the work that is being done on Quality Indicators (USG, OGAC and GF), there is the hope that resources will be allocated for QI.

Esther Sempira-CORE Initiative/Uganda

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- Uganda has developed a set of national Quality Standards, are now in the process of developing simpler guidelines based off of the national policy document. They have developed a tool for implementers to use and hope to move fast in communicating the guidelines.
- A TWG consisting of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, CORE Initiative, SAVE and UNICEF was created in order to develop the national policy document. They had experts from each of the different service areas come to brief the TWG on developing the standards. They have outcome standards that they want to be able to operationalize at the community level.
- In meetings, they've already observed that organizations are already identifying gaps in the services they are providing based off of the national quality standards.

Comment (Lucy): The process needs commitment from the national level, and at the organizational level—there needs to be a push for organizations to report on QI in order to really move the process forward. There needs to also be resources allocated in order to do this.

Comment: The Tanzania process is very similar to that of the Uganda process, it's more at a national level and they are trying to move it down to the implementers' level. Need to look at the national standards that were developed and how to really operationalize them, to understand what is really doable in the standards.

Wondwossen Hailu-Save the Children/Ethiopia

- In Ethiopia, they drafted service standards in July 2007. They have encountered challenges in operationalizing them. The whole process of pilot testing the standards feeds into refining the draft service standards and understanding whether they are doable. It has really been a collaborative process engaging all levels.
- They developed critical minimum activities for all the service standards. And have developed quality improvement teams that meet to discuss the process, gap analysis, and propose changes to implement by the teams.
- Held their first learning session where quality improvement teams get together with representatives from the government and other stakeholders to discuss the process each of the QI teams have gone through, the results of the gap analysis, and the changes they are implementing.

Closing

The HCI Project has developed a Quality Improvement section for OVC Programs on the OVC Support website hosted by International AIDS Alliance and FHI. The website includes a compendium of resources and examples of standards and other quality improvement tools used in various countries. You can access the section by going to the website www.ovcsupport.net and clicking on the **Quality Improvement** tab at the top of the page.