

RMNCH Country Scorecard Management Tool Workshops

28th October-31st October 2013

ALMA, working in partnership with WHO, UNICEF, USAID, CIFF and the EAC, and with funding support from CIFF supported two workshops on RMNCH scorecard management tools between the 28th - 31st October 2013. The first workshop brought together key development partners to learn key lessons from the development of RMNCH management scorecards to date. The second workshop brought together key stakeholders from 21 African countries and fifteen partner organisations to review progress to date in RMNCH scorecard development, orient countries in the principles and methodologies of scorecard development, and develop country roll-out plans. Overall objectives of the workshops included to:

- Share lessons from RMNCH scorecard work to date, as a means to strengthen the approach going forward
- Discuss linkages with ongoing national health processes such as national health reviews
- Build country capacity to develop, launch and use their RMNCH scorecards
- Reinforce partners' capabilities to support countries in the Scorecard process

The workshops were attended by 57 senior staff including directors of policy and planning, directors of maternal, newborn and child health and senior monitoring and evaluation Ministry of Health staff from 21 countries. Approximately 70 participants from partner organisations including UNICEF, USAID, WHO, Evidence for Action, CHAI, the RMNCH Strategy and co-ordination team, CIFF, Office of the Special Envoy for financing the health related MDGs, and the EAC participated.

Countries and partners were oriented around ongoing RMNCH initiatives including A Promise Renewed, Country Countdowns, Accountability mechanisms in general including a review of the recommendations of the commission for accountability and information on womens and childrens health as well as the underlying principles of RMNCH scorecard management tools.

The workshop was largely facilitated by the countries with existing scorecards, namely Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Malawi. Each country shared its experiences of scorecard development, and their presentations demonstrated a very high level of country ownership and leadership. The levels of country engagement for the participant countries was also very high, and included significant country engagement in optional evening clinics and lunchtime sessions. Key lessons learnt in the development of the existing scorecards included:

- Strong leadership from Ministers of Health contributed significantly to the success of the scorecard development process
- Moving to a web-platform has enhanced real time communication and transparency of information
- Country priorities have been well emphasized through the pressure testing exercise, supporting the underlying principle that RMNCH scorecards should primarily reflect national, rather than international priorities

- Strong national partner engagement particularly from WHO, UNICEF and USAID has strengthened the process and enhanced the likelihood of longer term sustainability
- Integrating the development of scorecards into the ongoing national processes such as national health reviews has reduced transaction costs and enhanced efficiency and national ownership
- Enhanced documentation of future indicators in waves has helped to plan for better indicators moving forward especially in the areas of nutrition and newborn health
- The scorecard development process has highlighted the need for more and better quality data, and has helped to facilitate additional data collection at country level
- Publishing the scorecard on a quarterly basis has stimulated discussion and transparency around health data at all levels including with heads of state and government, within ministries at national level, at sub-national level and also with key development partners

Countries and partners were taken through the various stages of developing a country RMNCH scorecard management tool including pre-work, selection of categories and indicators, establishing the accountability mechanism and the creation and running of the web platform.

Partners facilitated country group work sessions. Participating countries were almost overwhelmingly interested in developing their own RMNCH scorecard management tool with 15 of the 16 country delegations stated their intention to develop scorecards. Many of these countries want to undertake the process within the next 5 months (9 of the 15 countries have asked for scorecard development to happen in January or February). Countries see a broadly similar set of key success factors and potential challenges, including leadership support, interoperability with other data management systems (e.g. DHIS-2), alignment with other dashboards/scorecards, and data availability and quality. Roll out plans were completed for 15 countries including Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, DRC, Cape Verde, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mozambique, Mauritania, Burundi, Madagascar and South Sudan.

Next Steps

- ALMA is working with key partners including UNICEF, WHO and USAID to support the continued roll out of RMNCH scorecards in the priority 15 countries attending the RMNCH scorecard roll out in Nairobi including through the identification of focal points for each country
- ALMA is exploring with the University of Oslo opportunities to enhance compatibility with the DHIS2 platform and the RMNCH scorecard platform