



USAID'S HEALTH EVALUATION AND APPLIED RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT (HEARD) PROJECT

Building implementation science partnerships to accelerate the uptake of evidence to improve health programs and policies

The purpose of the HEARD Project is to leverage a global partnership to generate, synthesize, and use evidence to improve the development and implementation of policies and programs addressing health and development in low resource settings. Funded by USAID's Global Health Bureau, a key focus of the work is advancing priorities set forth in USAID's Preventing Child and Maternal Deaths (PCMD), achieving an AIDS Free Generation (AFG), and protecting communities from infectious diseases initiatives, including through the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS).

The goal of implementation science is to improve health outcomes by reviewing, synthesizing and promoting the use of evidence to inform policies and practices, and by accelerating the adoption, adaptation, and sustainability of those evidence-based policies and practices.

THE CHALLENGE

Why are there gaps in evidence to inform decision-making? One major reason is that priority-setting for investments in research is often determined without input from end point decision-makers resulting in a disconnect between evidence needed and evidence produced. Answering implementation questions requires a shift in research mentality and capacities towards a different approach to evidence generation that both relies on: diverse research designs and tools; diverse stakeholder engagement in

PARTNERS

GLOBAL TECHNICAL ANCHORS
 University of California, San Francisco and University of California Berkeley IGHD
 Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy at the City University of New York

SUB-REGIONAL ANCHOR PARTNERS
 West African Health Organization
 Infectious Diseases Institute
 Ifakara Health Institute
 James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University
 University of Indonesia

TECHNICAL RESOURCE PARTNERS
 Implementation Assistance Providers
 AmeriCares; CARE; EGPAF; GAPPS; Pathfinder; PCI; World Vision
 Evidence Advocates
 AAPH; CHESTRAD; ECSA-HC; Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves; PPD; White Ribbon Alliance
 Evaluation and Research Institutions
 Barcelona Institute for Global Health; Columbia University/AMDD; Harvard TH Chan SPH; Indiana University/AMPATH; LSHTM; Makerere University; MUHAS; Population Council; University of Bordeaux ISPED; University of Oslo; Universitas Gadjah Mada

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the prioritization of research; diverse implementation challenges such as acceptability, adaptability, scalability, and sustainability of interventions.

THE APPROACH

The HEARD Project seeks to effectively respond to these major challenges by:

- ▶ Actively engaging communities of implementers, policy-makers, investigators, and advocates interested in identifying evidence needs and priorities relevant to current implementation gaps and challenges to improve programs and policies;
- ▶ Developing issue-specific implementation science collaborations that bring together a diversely-skilled set of partners well-positioned to link evidence with the design and improvement of programs and policies;
- ▶ Creating iterative processes of evaluation and improvement, linking those with specific skill sets and capacities to evaluate current work and those empowered to make necessary changes in support of health goals, emerging threats, and new opportunities; and
- ▶ Expanding and sustaining these activities through the development of a global health Implementation Science Collaborative (ISC).

As a partnership composed of 33 diverse organizations from across Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America, with opportunities to expand, the HEARD Project works through four collaborative strategies: (1) partnership and agenda development; (2) data liberation and evidence strengthening; (3) research study and evaluation design and implementation; (4) process development

Policy-makers and program implementers grapple with issues like:

- *How can we scale-up the malaria prevention program from one district nationally?*
- *Will new mobile training technology be used by community health workers?*
- *Is it feasible to deliver nutrition supplements in rural districts?*
- *Why was the implementation of the new urban health policy successful in some informal settlements and not others?*

for evidence-to-use acceleration. HEARD's partnership approach to implementation science is rooted in the understanding that the use of evidence to improve health policies and programs requires the long-term active engagement of multiple actors representing an extensive array of skillsets and experiences. Current partners therefore include, regional health bodies, policy advocacy groups, civil society-based evidence advocates, implementation support organizations, research organizations, and academic institutions.

For more information on the HEARD Project

Visit our website: www.heardproject.org, follow us on Twitter: @HEARDProject, or contact us at HEARD@urc-chs.com

HEARD is a part of the USAID Health Research Program. Learn more here: www.harpsnet.org

