

# Success of a South to South Collaboration on Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) in Health: Case of Kenya & Zambia

Presenter

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# Introduction

- Emory KHISP is a Health Systems Strengthening project based in Kenya, and has been in existence since the year 2002.
  - 2002 – 2006 – Started development of the nursing database at Nursing Council of Kenya.
- Affiliated with the Task Force For Global Health and the Emory University both based in Atlanta, Georgia, USA
- Currently a sub prime partner of Palladium
- **Vision:** To transform health workforce management by promoting the utilization of HRH data for quality service delivery at National & county levels
- **Mission:** To implement sustainable interventions that promote the utilization of HRH data in health workforce management

# Projects

## Kenya Health Workforce Project (KHWP)

(2002 - 2017)

- Developed the nursing database at Nursing Council of Kenya. (2002-2006)
- Goal - Establish electronic health workforce information systems that provide accurate and real-time data for policy, health program planning, and management of Kenya's human resources for health (HRH).



## African Health Professions Regional Collaborative (ARC)

(2011 - 2015)

- Utilized South-South collaborative strategy across 18 countries supported countries
- Enhance nursing policy and regulation
- Ensure nurses' participation in HIV care (e.g. NIMART)
- LARC -*improved collaboration among healthcare teams to achieve & maintain HIV viral load suppression*



## Kenya Health Information System Program (KHISP)

(2018 – 2020)

- Goal - Increase utilization of HRH data at the National and County level to improve workforce management for better provision of HIV care and treatment.



# Milestones

1. Developed and deployed a regulatory Human Resource Information System (rHRIS) at 8 regulatory bodies in Kenya
2. Enhanced South to South collaboration by providing technical assistance in rollout of the rHRIS to the Health Professionals Council of Zambia and General Nursing Council of Zambia; In partnership with Emory University Project Zambia.
3. Produced the National Nursing Report on Nursing Status in Kenya, 2012 and a National Report on the Status of Healthcare Professionals in Kenya, 2015. Also published HRH papers in acclaimed international journals (Appendix 1)
4. Through ARC, supported the establishment, review and revision of CPD programs, standard operating procedures, and task sharing policies.
5. LARC- Laboratory African Regional Collaborative on *supporting viral load scale up to establish number of health workers trained in ART/ARV management for viral suppression (UNAIDS 3<sup>rd</sup> 90).*



# Case of Kenya & Zambia

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# Context

- Emory University was invited to develop a similar project at the health regulatory in Zambia agencies
  - Health Professionals Council of Zambia (HPCZ)
  - General Nursing Council of Zambia (GNC)
- A South-South collaborative model was chosen as a methodology for the implementation.
- The collaboration was done during the period of 2015 to 2017.

# Collaboration Approach

- Step1: Needs assessment
  - A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted by the Kenyan team on two Zambian health professionals' regulatory agencies.
  - The assessment focused on identifying the existing gaps and developing strategies to bridge the gaps in administrative, information technology (IT) infrastructure, data management, software, and online service needs.
  - The findings of the needs assessment was used to determine the project implementation approach and develop a work plan.



# The Collaboration Approach

## Step 2: Establishing the project office and team:

- The Kenyan team was involved in recruitment of a local project team (Zambia Project Team) through determining skills needed and conducting interviews.
- The Zambia team that was established comprised of a project director, two IT systems developers, a web developer, and a data analyst.
- On administrative support: Kenyan team assisted in establishing the NGO to host the project and oversee the implementation.





# The Collaboration Approach

- Step 3: Stakeholders' sensitization:
  - Several exchange trips were conducted between Kenya and Zambia teams to foster buy-in.
  - Stakeholders learnt about the success stories and the challenges that they might face during the process of implementation - this ensured that they were able to mitigate the expected challenges early in the project implementation

# The Collaboration Approach

- Step 4: Technical assistance and knowledge transfer:
  - The Kenyan Team shared their skills, knowledge, and tips on the various areas of implementation through technical assistance, training, exchange visits and mentorship.
  - The Zambian team managed and implemented the project taking into consideration the differences in some of the social, technical, economic, and environmental differences between the two countries to ensure a successful implementation of the project.



# The Collaboration Approach

- **Step 5: Software reuse:**
  - The teams collaborated in business process and software requirement analysis.
  - Due to the similarities of the functions of the councils in Kenya and Zambia, the data model and software developed for the Kenyan HRIS was easily used in Zambia with minimal customization by the Zambia team.
- **Step 6: Documents and guidelines reuse:**
  - The Kenyan team shared several project documents and guidelines that were customized and adopted by the Zambia team e.g. business process analysis guidelines, standard operating procedures templates, sustainability plans, gap analysis guide, implementation plan templates, and user manuals

# The Collaboration Approach

- Step 7: Project structure and management:
  - Joint Regulatory Collaborative (JRC), which entails a consultative forum comprising registrars and chief executive officers of various regulatory agencies was also adopted by Zambia from Kenya.
  - Establishment of the JRC provided a forum for the agencies to collaborate, share ideas, and realize synergies.
  - Joint Technical Advisory Committee (JTAC) – a consultative forum for the technical staff among the regulatory agencies was also adopted from Kenya.
  - JTAC further facilitated knowledge transfer and commitment to sustainability among the agencies in Zambia.



# The Collaboration Approach

- Step 8: Project formative evaluation:
  - To ensure successful implementation of the project in Zambia, the Kenyan team conducted a midterm implementation review of the HRIS as well as data quality review.
  - The reports from informed areas that required improvement after the initial rollout of the system.



# Outcome

- Faster implementation
  - Kenya took 5 years, Zambia was able to implement the project within 2 years which is less than half the time it took Kenya.
- Knowledge transfer
  - A transfer of skills and knowledge was achieved through capacity building and mentorship.
- Cost saving implementation
  - Zambia realized cost effective implementation having being able to implement the project in half the time it took Kenya using minimal cost.



# Challenges

- Technical expertise
  - The Kenya team had more experience in HRH and system development while the new Zambia team had limited knowledge & experience on HRH and system development resulting in longer and more consultative sessions to ensure correct implementation
- Time constraint as a result of competing tasks
  - Kenyan team needed create more time from their busy schedules to support the Zambia project.

# Challenges

- Policies diversity and difference in between the countries:
  - Diversity of the government policies in the two countries resulted into some of the best practices from Kenya could not be transferred directly to Zambia.
- Difference in technology development
  - Some of the technologies adopted in Kenya could not be easily transferred to Zambia e.g. mobile money payments.



# Lessons Learnt

- **Communication**
  - To minimize communication barriers, partners should be willing to use any and all forms of communication, including phone and e-mail.
- **Planning**
  - To assure appropriate collaboration development of a joint work plan where both collaborative teams should factor the time needed for collaboration activities (e.g., meetings, travel).
- **Promotion of team cohesion**
  - Build informal time into exercises or projects and organizing regular meetings was important in building trust and identifying each other's strengths and weaknesses.

# Lessons Learnt

- Willingness to learn and share
  - ensured the knowledge transferred is mastered and appropriately applied to the current projects as well as used to innovate for the future.
- Collaborative calendar
  - Calendar displays each partner organization's national and religious holidays, team members' vacations, and other absences

# Lessons Learnt

- Recipient country possesses minimum required skills
  - recipient country's project team should possess the minimum experience, skills, and knowledge (both technical and administrative) required for successful project implementation, taking into consideration the different country's environmental factors.
- The exchange trips conducted between Kenya and Zambia teams fostered buy-in and trust as the regulators shared their experiences on the system

# Conclusion

- South-South approach could be utilized effectively by other countries to more quickly develop and implement their own HRIS.
- This case is an evidence-based best practice of South-South collaboration to inform and influence development cooperation at the global level.

# Factors that Influenced Success of the Collaboration



- Recognized the leadership of the councils and relevant Ministries of Health. A Joint Regulatory Collaborative was formed among the regulatory councils.
- Sensitized the Zambia team on the project goals and objectives to get buy-in from stakeholders.
- Shared best practices and experiences through exchange visit of the leadership and other stakeholders.
- Provided feedback, discussed and compromised on the different policies and guidelines.
- Considered the difference in culture, norms and core values between the two countries.
- Focused on knowledge transfer and capacity building of the recipient country (Zambia) through trainings workshops.

## Factors that Influenced Success of the Collaboration ...

- Agreed on communication strategy through emails, phone and Skype calls to keep each other informed of progress.
- Close collaboration of the technical teams between the two countries. They held weekly meeting to review progress and challenges.
- Sharing and reuse of tools e.g. software and documentations were customized and reused by the recipient country (Zambia) to save cost and not to 'reinvent the wheel'.
- System Training followed after each member of the councils was clear on the process that will lead to change in carrying out regulatory functions in an efficient and effective way. Created a Joint Technical Team in preparation for system management and sustainability.

- Needs Assessment
- Establishing the project office and team
- Stakeholders sensitization
- Technical assistance and knowledge transfer
- Software re-use
- Documents & guidelines re-use
- Project structure and management
- Project implementation formative evaluation

### Processes/Activities

- Faster implementation of the project.
- Knowledge transfer to the recipient country.
- Cost saving during implementation by the recipient country.

### Outcomes

Kenya and Zambia  
South-South  
Collaboration in  
building HRIS

### Challenges

- Difference in government policies.
- Difference in level of technology and skills.
- Conflicting timelines as a results of difference in public and national holidays.

### Lessons Learnt

- Use effective communication strategies.
- Develop joint work-plan & planning.
- Promote teams cohesion.
- Develop joint calendar that displays each partner organization's national and religious holidays
- Teams must be willing and committed to learn.
- Recipient country's must posses minimum required skills

# Reference

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# THANK YOU!

