Learning Question 1: What are the contributions of systems thinking approaches and tools to changes in health system outcomes? How do systems thinking approaches affect health system outcomes?

Strengthening District Health Planning

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Organization: SAMVEG - Systems Approach for MNCH Focusing on Vulnerable Geographies (USAID supported project led by IPE Global Limited)

Context

- Strength of systems thinking is visible in the capacity of its instruments to effect changes at the local level to improve quality and equity.
- RMNCHA (Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child Health and Adolescence) Agenda, using strategic approach to develop capacity for planning, prioritizing, transparency, and accountability among program managers at the district level.
- Improvement in collected and disseminated data on health and development indicators in terms of health and development.
- Therefore, Government of India has mandated development of District Health Action Plans (DHAP) to drive the resources and budget through Program Management Information System (PMIS) to monitor, evaluation, and accountability.
- DHAPs were developed for 2 non-aspirational districts of state Madhya Pradesh later in the year.

Activity Description

- RMNCHA, health planning, and program management are areas where systems thinking is especially effective in making health plans using available data. Through a series of steps, there is engagement in data, wherein intervention coverage in diverse districts link with health planning building blocks, delivery, capacities, opportunities and resilience and access as a result of institutionalization, and new data were incorporated in the data program implementation plan (DPIP).
- The activity included regional and district level program managers, a carefully planned and executed participatory RMNCHA workshop facilitated by the works in order to improve the focus on new plans.
- The workshop was conducted by RMNCHA Districts across India, and it enabled development aligned with the RMNCHA plan. Systematic, data-driven approach to planning and capacity building with a participatory approach was central to the development of the DPIP and was developed in a manner that incorporates and reinforces data analysis and action. The digital tool has a version of the availability to be used and, also, serves as a repository of district data.

Activity Impact

- The activity included regional and district level program managers, a carefully planned and executed participatory 3 steps’ workshop facilitated by the works in order to improve the focus on new plans.
- The workshop was conducted by RMNCHA Districts across India, and it enabled development aligned with the RMNCHA plan. Systematic, data-driven approach to planning and capacity building with a participatory approach was central to the development of the DPIP and was developed in a manner that incorporates and reinforces data analysis and action. The digital tool has a version of the availability to be used and, also, serves as a repository of district data.

Evidence

- "In this workshop, we learned to critically evaluate the problems and potential solutions for local problems. The participatory approach in a workshop setting provided limited time for discussions across all RMNCHA thematic groups. It is suggested that in the future to have a 5-day workshop that facilitates prior analysis of data providing more time for developing recommendations.
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Facilitators

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Challenges

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Lessons Learned

- Developing program capacity at the sub-national level is essential for decentralized planning and prioritization.
- Being guided to record data from the perspective of planning facilitates willingness to use data.
- Developing capacity at the sub-national level is essential for decentralized planning and prioritization.