Question 2: What are effective and sustainable mechanisms or processes to integrate local, community, sub-national, national, and regional voices, and contributions into health system strengthening efforts?

Empowering Communities to take action for their health through social accountability and community monitoring mechanisms at primary healthcare centers in Jharkhand, India

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Context

The NISHTHA Project was launched by Jhpiego in 2017 in collaboration with USAID to strengthen health systems and increase access to health services in India. The project aims to empower communities to take action for their health through social accountability and community monitoring mechanisms.

Activity Description

The NISHTHA Project, in collaboration with USAID, implemented a community health worker (HWC) program in Jharkhand, India. The program aimed to address health system challenges and behavioral factors contributing to the delivery of primary healthcare services. The desired outcomes included increased community ownership, shifts in behaviors, attitudes, and social dynamics within and outside the health system.

Activity Impact:

- The impact of the JAS intervention was significant in terms of awareness and skills in community engagement.
- Community ownership and accountability were improved.
- Behavioral changes and shifts in social dynamics were observed.
- The effectiveness of the intervention was supported by evidence-based decision making.

Facilitators

- USAID-NISHTHA project and Jhpiego's support and guidance provided critical support for the implementation of the JAS intervention.
- The project facilitated the network of actors, capacity building, and the development of mechanisms to support the intervention.

Challenges

- Limited community awareness and participation initially was a challenge.
- Addressing skepticism and resistance was another challenge.
- The need for continuous learning and adaptation was a constant challenge.

Lessons Learned

Lessons learned during the implementation of this activity have significant implications for future activities and approaches:

- Empowering communities, involving local representatives, and fostering collaboration with various stakeholders is crucial.
- Addressing skepticism and resistance requires a multi-faceted approach.
- Continuous learning and adaptation are essential for sustainable impact.

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