USAID ASSIST Project Semi-Annual Performance Monitoring Report FY18

University Research Co., LLC (URC) and its partners have completed 5.5 years of implementation of the USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems (ASSIST) Project. This report is the eleventh Semi-Annual Performance Monitoring Report for ASSIST, summarizing the project’s accomplishments and results during the first two quarters (Q1-2) of Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18). In late September 2017, the project was awarded a two-year costed extension with additional funding for Zika-related activities. No further funding was provided for non-Zika work. The project’s FY18 work plan thus focuses mainly on Zika-related support in eight countries and completion of previously funded work in other countries.

Overall goals
The USAID ASSIST Project fosters improvements in a range of health care processes through the application of modern improvement methods by host country providers and managers in USAID-assisted countries. The project’s central purpose is to build the capacity of host country health and social service systems to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, client-centeredness, safety, accessibility, and equity of the services they provide. In addition to supporting the implementation of improvement strategies, the project seeks to generate new knowledge to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of applying improvement methods in low- and middle-income countries. USAID ASSIST country programs align with the goals of United States Government’s global initiatives and policies, including preventing child and maternal deaths, achieving HIV epidemic control, combating other public health threats, protecting life, and addressing gender inequalities.

Where we work
During the first half of FY18, USAID ASSIST provided technical support in 23 countries through field and core funding. USAID Mission funds supported work in nine countries: Cambodia [1], Côte d’Ivoire [2], India [3], Indonesia [4], Lesotho [5], Mali [6], Swaziland [7], Tanzania [8], and Uganda [9]. USAID core funds from the Office of HIV/AIDS supported activities in seven countries: Kenya [10], Lesotho [5], Malawi [11], Mozambique [12], Namibia [13], Tanzania [8], and Zimbabwe. Funds for Neglected Tropical Diseases supported improvement work to combat the Zika virus [14] in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Peru. USAID cross-bureau-funded activities, through the Office of Health Systems, supported malaria prevention activities in Malawi and global and regional initiatives that contribute to local and global learning in improvement.

FY18 Q1-2 accomplishments and results:

- **Improvement in key indicators:** As discussed in this report, ASSIST-supported programs demonstrated improved care and outcomes for a range of services, including antenatal and postnatal care, essential obstetric and newborn care, screening of pregnant women and newborns for Zika-related signs and symptoms, Zika care and support, PMTCT, and HIV prevention.

- **Research and evaluation studies:** At the end of the reporting period, the project had 29 research studies in planning, underway or completed in 14 countries. Three are multi-country studies.

- **Promoting the use of improvement methods:** During the reporting period, project staff published nine peer-reviewed articles [15]; seven case studies [16]; four technical and research reports [17]; and 10 guides, tools, and job aids [18]. ASSIST staff led six sessions and made eight oral presentations at six regional and international conferences. ASSIST’s work continued to be promoted through the project’s website and social media engagement, with some 27,867 visitors viewing 61,572 pages within the ASSIST Knowledge Portal during the past two quarters.