Evaluation of the Rapid, Multi-Country, Parallel Process, Multi-Tasking Approach to Startup of Short-Term Technical Assistance to Improve Service Delivery in Newborn and Child Health in the Context of USAID’s Zika Response

In 2018, the USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems (ASSIST) Project started a new partnership with four Eastern and Southern Caribbean countries impacted by the Zika virus: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The goal of the project was to provide short-term technical assistance (STTA) to strengthen the health systems’ capacity to detect newborns and young children potentially affected by Zika and to address their health needs. To meet these objectives, ASSIST developed an innovative approach based on its existing model for service delivery improvement. This novel approach is known as Rapid, Multi-country, Parallel Process, Multi-tasking Approach for a Project Startup (RMPP-MAPS). An evaluation was conducted to document the STTA startup activities, to identify enabling and constraining factors, and to capture lessons learned.

Methods: An external consultant conducted remote in-depth interviews with individuals involved in the startup using semi-structured interview guides and retrieved data from the review of project documents.

Results: Using RMPP-MAPS, the ASSIST Project successfully implemented the startup for complex STTA in four countries within less than four months, spanning mid-May to early September 2018. Project milestones included achieving buy-in from stakeholders, co-developing the technical scope and materials, and rapidly executing critical operational functions. Dedicated project teams, country leaderships, and local champions were essential to overcoming the main challenges, which included a condensed timeframe, lack of in-country offices, and country-level factors such as a shortage of health care workers and a weak health infrastructure.

Conclusions: The RMPP-MAPS is a feasible and resource-efficient mechanism of interest to implementers, donors, and low and middle-income countries facing temporal and financial limitations to rapidly addressing public health priorities.

Evaluation of the rapid, multi-country approach to startup of short-term technical assistance to improve service delivery [1]

Organization(s): USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems (ASSIST) Project/URC

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