

# Closing the Gap:

***What are the Strategies to Bridge the gap between policy, Research and Local frontline Organisations?***

World Vision\*

## **Children & HIV&AIDS**

**Action Now Action  
How: An International  
Symposium**

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## Outline

- Some bottlenecks to effective implementation of research for policy and programming
- Case studies of good utilisation
- Lessons learned and key recommendations

# Introduction

- Growing consensus on need for applied social science to inform policy and programming for children
- Some bottlenecks to effective utilisation of research:
  - Research capacity
  - Limited planning for utilisation by researchers and funders
  - Balancing between research and needs of vulnerable children
  - Lack of culture of reflection and learning

# Research Capacity Gaps: Quality and Relevant Research

- Lack of and under funded M&E units within implementing agencies
- Paucity of skilled researchers
  - Limited support for developing local researchers capacity
  - Brain drain
  - External researchers may have limited understanding of key contextual programming issues

# North-South Research Capacity- Building Partnerships

- Some good examples of partnerships that have worked well
  - Mutual respect and cross-cultural understanding
  - Sufficient time and systematic transfer of skills
- However some have had limited success
  - Unequal North-South partnerships
  - Limited systematic and practical transfer of skills
  - South researchers' names appended to publications

# Relevant Research and Communication Strategy

- **Relevance informed by policy and programming needs**
  - Failure to involve policymakers and programme implementers in informing the research agenda
- **Limited audience segmentation**
  - Dissemination strategies that do not factor varying needs of policymakers, programmers, CBO and other community-based implementing partners

## Challenges in Balancing Meeting Children's Needs, and Research and M&E

- **HIV&AIDS impact immense**
- **Research is expensive**
- **Dilemma and challenge for evidence-based programming**
- **However, limited support for quality control and evidence might be more costly**

## Organizational Learning Culture

- **Changing programming strategies expensive**
- **Few agencies have strategic learning goals and culture**
- **Leadership commitment key in transforming organizational culture to one of reflection and learning**
- **E.g. World Vision Models of Learning R&D unit for pilot-testing child-focused HIV prevention and care models**



# Integrating Strategies for ownership and utilisation of findings

- **Integral components of successful research project design:**
  - Stakeholder participation and learning
  - Schedule and funding for internal and external dissemination
  - Strategies and funding for community and district level dissemination
- **Factors contributed to World Vision designing new HIV prevention model**

# A case Study of a Successful Research and Utilisation Model

- Navrongo Research Initiative and CHPs Project in Ghana
  - Model pilot-testing results indicated significant reduction in child mortality and fertility rate
  - Government policy and programme change in relation to community-based primary health care
  - Scaling up of the innovation in 104 out of 110 Districts in Ghana in 2 year period. Consideration of massive scale of the problem in allocating resources

# Key Lessons Learned from Navrongo Experience I

- Strong partnership and meaningful community participation are key
- Joint researchers-policymakers and Programme Managers ownership of the results
- Good community entry and continuous outreach
- Use of diffusion innovations and planned organisational change

## Key Lessons Learned from Navrongo Experience 2

- Planned dissemination to foster discussion, debate and consensus on practical implication of findings
- Balancing external assistance with strategies for internal ownership
- For effective scale up have many pilot demonstrations in multiple sites
- Pilot research site continue to serve as a learning site for practical experience
- Tested model credible and feasible to program managers and policymakers

## Conclusion and Key recommendations

- Possible to overcome existing challenges to research utilisation
- Multiple strategies required:
  - Support researchers to ensure they do high quality research
  - Supporting researchers to play a more regular and effective role in policymaking
  - Strong and more equal North-South partnerships
  - Researchers should involve policymakers and programmers in setting the research agenda and in dissemination of results
  - Inclusion and funding a systematic dissemination and support for utilisation strategy

# Thank You



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