

## October Monthly Progress Report

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African Strategies for Health

November 14, 2012

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# African Strategies for Health (ASH)

## Monthly Progress Report: October 2012

### 1. Notable Achievements

- ASH made additional revisions to the African Union's 2012 MNCH Status report, based on comments from AusAID and the AU, and submitted a final version of the document to the AU.
- A revised version of a regional TB strategy was completed and shared with USAID (Africa/SD and the Global Bureau).

### 2. Technical Updates

#### a. Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health

##### IPTp

During the month of October, the main focus of the ASH MNCH work was on IPTp. The ASH specialists for Infectious Diseases and MNCH both worked on this activity. This included the data analysis and presentation of preliminary findings on the use of IPTp and ANC among women receiving IPTp in Malawi at a joint meeting with MCHIP, DELIVER and Presidential Malaria Initiative (PMI), where planned activities for the year two work plan were also discussed.

ASH, additionally, began developing the protocol for implementation of its work plan in this area, including identification of criteria for country selection.

##### Case Studies and AU Report

ASH participated in additional discussions about the MNCH case studies being conducted in Asia, in preparation for discussions with collaborating partners about possibly conducting similar case studies in Africa in 2013. ASH also finalized revisions to the African Union's 2012 MNCH Status, based on comments from AusAID and the AU, and submitted a final version of the document to the AU.

##### Call to Action Meeting USAID/Ethiopia

Following up on the September meeting between ASH and USAID/Ethiopia, the ASH team participated in further discussions with USAID regarding the proposed Ethiopia Call to Action meeting. The following next steps were identified:

- USAID will inform ASH of progress in discussions with the Ethiopian MOH;
- If the meeting is going to be a regional meeting and support from ASH is needed, USAID/Ethiopia or the AU will request support from USAID/AFR;
- USAID/Ethiopia and USAID/AFR will explore how to finance any ASH support for the meeting. Possibilities include: utilizing some of the \$80,000 ASH received from USAID/AFR to support the AU; utilizing other ASH project funds; and/or being "reimbursed" by USAID/Ethiopia with field support funding in the next fiscal year; and
- ASH will continue to move forward in developing a subcontract with a local Ethiopian organization to support the HSS network (this organization could

eventually also be used to provide logistical support for the scientific meeting if needed).

Other activities in October included the MNCH strategic team review and meeting with team members on the proposed work plan for year two of ASH.

## **b. Infectious Diseases**

### **TB**

A revised version of a regional TB strategy was completed and shared with USAID (Africa/SD and the Global Bureau). ASH met with the Global Bureau to share and discuss the work plan developed with WHO/AFRO during the Brazzaville visit. The Global Bureau was well represented at the meeting and there was opportunity to better understand WHO/AFRO's current TB activities.

### **IDSR**

The focus for IDSR was on clarifying the next steps for the IDSR advocacy and communication (ACD) strategy. ASH participated in a teleconference with CDC to discuss objectives for the ACD strategy. ASH participated in a handover meeting with USAID and CDC with the departure of Mary Harvey to Ethiopia. The cholera meeting scheduled for 30 October was postponed due to Hurricane Sandy.

## **c. Health Systems Strengthening**

### **mHealth Compendium**

The HSS team spent much of the month of October working on the first edition of the mHealth compendium. The team met with the E2A project to ensure that the compendium was well aligned with the paper E2A was writing for the mHealth Tanzania meeting. The team also reached out to over twenty-six different organizations to gather inputs for the compendium. A draft compendium is expected to be finalized with approximately thirty-five case studies in time activities for the USAID conference, "Using Mobile Technology to Improve Family Planning and Health" in Tanzania mid-November. In addition, ASH participated in planning activities for this USAID conference.

### **HSS Network**

The HSS team worked closely with USAID/AFR to plan for a presentation on the health care financing reforms in Ethiopia at the Health Systems Research meeting in Beijing November 2012. The team participated in conference calls to organize the presentation and collaborated on the development of background documents to hand out at the meeting.

The ASH team moved forward with the evaluation of the three Ethiopian organizations which are being considered for a subcontract with ASH to support the HSS network and, in particular, to support a second round of study tours to Ethiopia. The final selection should be made in November once references checks are completed.

ASH also worked on a draft HSS ACD strategy to communicate the advantages of using local African consultants. The goal of this communications strategy is to

increase the frequency of contracting of African consultants by USAID missions for HSS consultancies, by increasing demand for local consultants. This draft will be finalized and forwarded to USAID/AFR next month for their review.

**d. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)**

ASH worked on the development of the Health Information Systems (HIS) study protocol. ASH met with its incoming M&E Specialist to discuss the draft HIS protocol and brainstorm ideas for an African partner. Since HIS strengthening activities are not a priority for WHO/AFRO under their USAID grant, ASH will explore whether WAHO and Jembi Health Systems would be interested in collaborating on the HIS study. Discussions with regional USAID missions for West Africa and East Africa will ultimately inform ASH’s selection of an African partner.

**e. Cross Cutting**

**Harmonizing for Health in Africa (HHA)**

On October 3 – 4, the Technical Committee of HHA held its meeting in Nairobi to prepare for the 7th meeting of the Regional Directors of HHA agencies that took place on October 4 – 5 also in Nairobi. USAID as one of the HHA agencies was represented by Ishrat Husain and Julia Henn. In preparation for these two meetings, the ASH Project Director held a conference call with Henn and Husain on October 2 in order to brief them on the main points that had emerged from the Steering Committee in Harare September 11 – 12, and to share some ideas on upcoming discussions to be held during the two Nairobi meetings.

**3. Management and Administration**

**a. Finance**

The books for October, 2012 have not yet been closed. It is expected that the information will be available sometime after November 15, 2012. Therefore, for the purpose of this report expenses for October, 2012 is based on estimates.

1) Total Obligation	= \$6,783,004
2) Expenses	
Total expenditure and accruals as of September 30, 2012	= \$2,371,354
Estimated expenses for October, 2012	= <u>\$ 180,000</u>
Total estimated expenses as of October 31, 2012	= <u>\$2,551,354</u>
Pipeline (1-2)	= \$4,231,650

**b. Project Management**

The template for the strategic team annual report was finalized with USAID/AFR. Utilizing the template, a draft strategic team report for year one of ASH was developed. This was shared with the USAID/AFR focal points for each of the respective strategic teams in order to incorporate their feedback. It is hoped that the final report can be submitted in November once the USAID/AFR feedback is received.

The ASH-USAID/AFR strategic teams each met to discuss the proposed year two work plan activities. When appropriate, the proposed collaborative activities with WHO/AFRO were also discussed in order to obtain USAID/AFR feedback and approval for moving forward. In some cases, such as with the HSS strategic team, guidance was obtained from USAID/AFR regarding which activities ones ASH should prioritize and which should be dropped. Following these discussions ASH worked to revise the draft year two work plan in order to reflect inputs from USAID/AFR and WHO/AFRO.

**c. Project Communication and Dissemination**

During the previous month, USAID informed ASH that there is a moratorium on all new partner websites, and that further information will be given at a later date on whether this will be lifted or not. Thus website planning activities were put on hold until further notice, although alternative plans to have a page on the MSH website were explored. In October, ASH applied for and received USAID permission to have a project website through a USAID web approval advisory board. Plans will now be made to move forward with finalizing the design and implementation of the website.

ASH staff also met with the Communications Strategic Team and prepared and finalized a year one review of its progress.

**d. Partnership Collaboration**

The ASH technical staff worked closely with their strategic teams to gather input on the proposed ASH-WHO/AFRO collaborative activities. Based on these discussions the ASH team then worked to revise the draft year two work plan accordingly.

**e. Other Updates**

Staffing

*M&E Specialist:* Lungi Okoko accepted the employment offer from Khulisa to serve as the new M&E Specialist for ASH. It is expected that the M&E Specialist will start on November 1, 2012.

*Project Officer (PO):* Sarah Konopka started in her new position as Project Officer for ASH on October 15, 2012.

**f. COR Meetings**

One COR meeting took place on October 2, 2012

**g. Potential Issues or Areas Needing USAID Support**

ASH has requested USAID/AFR assistance in order to coordinate with USAID/West Africa and USAID/East Africa to finalize the year two work plan.

**4. Key Activities Planned for Next Month**

- a. Finalize the ASH PMP

- b. Submit draft partnership strategy to USAID/AFR the draft ASH partnership strategy
- c. Continue to work with WHO/AFRO, USAID/AFR, and CDC to get inputs for a first draft of the IDSR ACD strategy for internal review; work with WHO AFRO to seek internal permission to create a soft logo and branding strategy for IDSR (ongoing)
- d. Draft the advocacy, communications, and dissemination strategy to increase use of local consultants in Africa by USAID/AFR in the area of HSS and submit to USAID/AFR for review.
- e. Complete the first annual mHealth Compendium
- f. Participate in planning activities for the USAID conference, “Using Mobile Technology to Improve Family Planning and Health” in Tanzania (November 2012). Assist USAID/AFR in preparing for the meeting and disseminate the mHealth compendium during the meeting. Attend the Second Global Symposium on Health Systems Research to support a satellite session on health financing reforms in Ethiopia.
- g. Participate in the International Union against TB and Lung Disease in Kuala Lumpur
- h. Finalization of technical papers on community strategies as well as on advocacy with parliamentarians and other elected leaders.
- i. Participate in HHA Steering Committee meetings and facilitate USAID involvement in the “Workshop for development of training materials for national counterparts in National Health Policies, Strategies and Plans” scheduled to take place in Nairobi December 5 – 7. 2012.

## **5. Attachments**

- a. Updated list of COR Letters and Related Clearances