

## August Monthly Progress Report

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African Strategies for Health

September 15, 2013

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# African Strategies for Health (ASH)

## Monthly Progress Report: August 2013

### 1. Notable Achievements

- ASH co-led a capacity building session for African for representatives from 42 health professional associations and ministry of health officials from 16 African countries during the Regional Forum on Maternal and Newborn Health in Arusha, Tanzania during the week of August 19-23.
- ASH participated in the evaluation of the IDSR system set up Botswana. This is an important milestone in the process of developing evaluation guidelines that will assist countries to self-evaluate IDSR performance and implementation with limited external support.

### 2. Technical Updates

#### A. Maternal, Newborn and Child Health

##### Leadership and Management Capacity Building of Regional Health Professional Associations

Following on to several months of working with the Survive & Thrive GDA partners to plan a session on capacity building for African health professional associations (HPA), ASH co-led the session for representatives from 42 HPAs and ministry of health officials from 16 African countries during the Regional Forum on Maternal and Newborn Health in Arusha, Tanzania during the week of August 19-23.

##### IPTp

ASH began recruitment of a senior consultant to implement the IPTp facility assessments and quality assurance tool development. The ASH MNCH specialist also participated in two conference calls of the RBM Malaria in Pregnancy Working Group that were focused on finalizing the Working Group's annual work plan. Much of the rest of the month was focused on planning MNCH activities for year three of ASH.

#### B. Infectious Diseases

##### IDSR

ASH participated in the IDSR evaluation that took place in Botswana during August 2013. Based on the initial findings, Botswana has set up a fairly robust surveillance system. The evaluation has demonstrated that a country can apply the technical guidelines and implement an integrated disease surveillance system with limited external support. Country led operationalization of the IDSR technical guidelines with minimal external support, is an important confirmation of the validity of the implementation approach and framework developed for IDSR.

##### Malaria

The assessment of malaria SRN's continued during August. The two evaluators have faced the challenge of accessing information from key informants and the SRN's. This was discussed with PMI and efforts are being made to resolve the blockages.

The focus of the IRS evaluation in Tanzania was to complete the contracting arrangements with consultants and manage travel logistics.

**C. Health Systems Strengthening**

AGOA

ASH completed and submitted the technical brief and PowerPoint presentation making the case for “Health as a Driver of Sustained and Accelerated Trade and Investment”. The presentation and its technical brief were presented by the East African Community Secretary General, Ambassador Dr. SEZIBERA Richard, to Ministers of Finance and senior trade representatives at 2013 U.S.-Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum also known as the AGOA Forum, on August 12-13, 2013 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Landscape Analysis

ASH finalized the hiring of a senior West African consultant for the Landscape Analysis of Key Regional Organizations in the African Health Sector. The M&E Specialist provided technical guidance to the consultant and briefed her on the use of interview protocols for key informants interviews. Key informant interviews continued through direct face to face interviews in Africa (Project Director) and remotely (Project Officer).

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

The M&E Specialist developed activity description narratives and budgets for Health Systems Strengthening activities (including M&E, eHealth/mHealth activities) included in the draft ASH workplan for year 3.

**3. Management and Administration**

**A. Finance**

MSH accounting has not closed the books for August, 2013 yet. Therefore, for the purpose of this report, expenses for August, 2013 are based on estimates.

|   |   |                    |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1) Total Obligation                             | = | \$7,430,658        |
| 2) Expenses                                     |   |                    |
| Total expenditure and accruals of July 31, 2013 | = | \$4,744,978        |
| Estimated expenses for August, 2013             | = | <u>\$ 260,000</u>  |
| Total estimated expenses as of Aug 31, 2013     | = | <u>\$5,004,978</u> |
| Estimated Pipeline (1-2) as of August 31, 2013  | = | \$2,425,680        |

**B. Project Management**

ASH team members met with Core Team members and developed first drafts for Year 3 work plan activity descriptions.

**C. Project Communication and Dissemination**

The project is awaiting comments and feedback from the COR on ASH website.

#### **D. Partnership Collaboration**

Nothing to report.

#### **E. Other Updates**

##### **a. Staffing**

MSH has advertised the Project Director position.

Lungi Okoko, M&E Specialist, has decided to stay with the project.

#### **F. COR Meetings**

COR meetings took place on August 22, 2013.

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

- a. Begin implementation of the Tanzania IRS evaluation
- b. Complete recruitment of the consultant for the IPTp assessments and tool and have discussions with USAID missions in Uganda and Liberia to confirm their agreement and make plans for the assessments to take place in those countries.
- c. Finalize the articles based on the Systematic Reviews of Relationships between HIV and Maternal Mortality and selection of the peer-reviewed journal to which they will be submitted.
- d. Develop the ASH presentation for project's Quarterly Review with USAID
- e. Meet with USAID/AFR to finalize the list of potential ASH activities for year 3
- f. Conduct a quick literature scan of existing evidence on the relationship between dependency ratio and income per capita
- g. Oversee the completion of key informant interviews for the Landscape Analysis of Key Regional Organizations in the African Health Sector. Begin data analysis and prepare for presentation of preliminary findings.
- h. Initiate detailed planning for IDSR session at the AFENET Conference

### **5. Attachments**

- a. Updated list of COR Letters and Related Clearances