

Partners Project Team

Institutional Support to  
Partners in Population and Development

Family Planning Management Development (FPMD)

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Office of Population, USAID

Management Sciences for Health

165 Allandale Road

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# **Institutional Support to Partners in Population and Development**

**Provided by Family Planning Management Development Project  
Management Sciences for Health  
Boston, Massachusetts  
1997-1998**

## **Background and Goals of the Assistance**

Technical assistance and support from Management Sciences for Health (MSH), through its Family Planning Management Development (FPMD) Project, is being provided to strengthen the capacity of the Partners in Population and Development and its Secretariat. This technical assistance in institutional support and capacity building is expected to enhance the ability of Partners in Population and Development and, in particular, the staff of the Partners Secretariat to meet its goals of improved quality and accessibility of reproductive health and family planning programs through expanded South-South collaboration.

## **Objectives**

There are three expected results or objectives of the FPMD technical assistance to Partners which are related to and directed toward several specific, stated functions of the Secretariat. These are:

1. Features of member country programs which have particular salience for South-South technical exchanges will be identified and classified through country needs assessments.
2. An information exchange strategy and related mechanisms, including electronic communication systems, will be developed to facilitate communications between Partners member countries.
3. Policies, procedures and practices related to personnel, finance, accounting and procurement systems will be developed and used by the Partners Secretariat for enhancing and streamlining its work.

## **Activities (Achieved and Planned)**

The activities listed below are related to the specific objectives of FPMD technical assistance as stated above and they are numbered accordingly.

1. Identification and classification of features of member country programs for South to

## South exchanges

- FPMD staff met with Secretariat staff in Dhaka in August 1997 to design a framework, plans and a schedule for undertaking three country needs assessments
- The first assessment, in Bangladesh, was undertaken during October 1997 to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the various aspects of the national family planning/reproductive health program, including activities of selected national non-governmental organizations, and the capacity of the program to host technical exchanges from and to provide other assistance to other Partners member countries. The report of this assessment is completed.
- Based on this first assessment, FPMD worked with Secretariat staff to finalize guidelines to be used in undertaking the balance of country studies.
- Using these guidelines, at least two additional country studies (Morocco and Zimbabwe) were completed in March 1998 by FPMD staff working with in-country consultants and Secretariat staff to enable the latter to undertake studies in the remaining member countries. These reports will be forthcoming.
- A system for classification of member country program features, including areas in which country programs are already prepared to provide exchanges and assistance as well as those areas in which resources must be further developed for which they might solicit assistance from other member countries, will be developed by FPMD staff and Partners Secretariat program staff.

## 2. Development of an information exchange strategy and related mechanisms, including electronic communication systems, to facilitate communications between member countries.

(This activity is proposed for implementation in several phases; specific activities for the first phase are listed below in detail; later activities will be determined as part of these Phase I initiatives.)

### Phase 1--Joint development of a strategy paper and work plan for information exchange

- FPMD staff met with Secretariat staff in Dhaka during August 1997 to develop plans for data collection and a strategy development workshop
- A survey instrument was designed to assess basic information and communication infrastructure and resources available in each Partners member organization and affiliate and was translated into French and Spanish.
- This survey was mailed in October 1997 to Partners members and affiliate

organizations in 12 countries.

- A presentation was made by FPMD at the November 1997 Partners Board Meeting on the potential and plans for development of the Partners information exchange strategy to enhance communications between Partners member countries.
- Results of the mail survey are being analyzed and a report of the results will be prepared for presentation at the March 1998 Executive Committee meeting.
- Using results of the assessment, an information exchange strategy paper will be drafted to include the requirements for technical support and equipment needs.
- This draft strategy will be vetted and expanded during a one-week workshop for selected Partners representatives to be facilitated by FPMD staff in Boston in mid-1998.
- The strategy paper will be presented to the Partners, through the Secretariat, to be used for the development of a work plan with Secretariat staff for activities to follow this initial phase of communications activities.

3. Development of policies, procedures and practices related to personnel, finance, accounting and procurement systems for use by the Secretariat.

- FPMD finance and operations staff visited Dhaka during August 1997 to work with accounting and other staff of the Partners Secretariat to develop procedures and templates for internal financial and accounting systems; customize existing software or select appropriate alternative packages as needed. (Emphasis was placed on budget monitoring and reporting, encumbered expense tracking and pipeline analysis for presentation to UNFPA/UNDP per their requirements).
- FPMD staff met with UNFPA/UNDP headquarters staff to determine their rules, regulations and mechanisms for management of the Partners Trust Fund
- FPMD identified a local consultant to follow up on systems development activities begun during the August visit to Dhaka. This individual has now been named Administrative Manager for the Secretariat and will be the key contact for continued FPMD assistance in this area.
- FPMD brought an MSH staff member who resides in Nepal to Bangladesh to assess in-country information and communication technology resources availability to support Secretariat operations and to assist in the design of the Secretariat's internal electronic communication system.
- A second visit of the FPMD staff consultant in administrative and finance systems

took place in February 1998 to continue the work begun during the first visit and to work with the Administrative Manager on the design and implementation of new systems and training staff in their use.

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