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Julie Polumbo for USAID East Africa

PROPEL Health Quarter 1 Report

September–December 2022

Promoting Results and Outcomes through Policy and Economic Levers (PROPEL) Health is a five-year cooperative agreement funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development under Agreement No. 7200AA22CA00023, beginning September 23, 2022. PROPEL Health is implemented by Palladium in collaboration with African Economic Research Consortium, Avenir Health, Population Reference Bureau, RTI International, Samasha Medical Foundation, and the White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood.

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Abbreviations

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|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AMELP | Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan |
| AOR | Agreement Officer's Representative |
| FP/RH | family planning/reproductive health |
| IR | intermediate result |
| MCH | maternal and child health |
| MEL | monitoring, evaluation, and learning |
| PEPFAR | U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief |
| PROPEL | Promoting Results and Outcomes through Policy and Economic Levers |
| USAID | U.S. Agency for International Development |

Project Overview

Promoting Results and Outcomes through Policy and Economic Levers (PROPEL) Health is a USAID-funded five-year \$100 million project awarded to Palladium on September 23, 2022. PROPEL Health aims to improve the enabling environment for equitable and sustainable health services, supplies, and delivery systems through: (1) policy development and implementation, (2) adequate, predictable, and sustainable health financing, (3) enhanced government stewardship, transparency, and accountability, and (4) use of evidence-based advocacy approaches at global, national, and subnational levels to promote best practices. It focuses on family planning/reproductive health (FP/RH), primary healthcare, and the integration of FP/RH with HIV and maternal and child health (MCH).

The project's strategy, as detailed in the conceptual framework (Annex A), prioritizes localizing policy, advocacy, financing, and governance leadership, technical assistance, and capacity development to enhance resilience and sustainability, drawing on local actors to co-create country programs and lead implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Progress Report

In the project's first quarter, September to December 2022, Palladium and its core partners primarily focused on project start-up: ensuring staffing needs are met, producing required project deliverables in a quality and timely manner, complying with internal Palladium requirements, and establishing country offices as the project received Mission buy-ins.

Some key achievements (see Figure 1) include submitting to USAID the project's first FP/RH core workplan, a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan, and an Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan, and submitting to Palladium a sustainable business plan and project management manual. The project also developed four country workplans (see Field Programs), onboarded its technical leadership team, and established PROPEL Health's Kenya and Togo offices.

On November 17, 2022, Pattaya City, Thailand, PROPEL Health hosted a breakfast meeting for more than 30 USAID Mission and headquarter representatives and partners as a side-meeting to the International Conference on Family Planning. The event, supported by the project's Communications and Knowledge Management team, served to launch the project to the various USAID Mission representatives attending the conference.

Figure 1. PROPEL Health by the Numbers, Quarter 1 Achievements



Planning and Start-up

Over the course of the project's first three months, PROPEL Health onboarded essential staff, established key internal communication systems, engaged with the project's Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) team and missions, and complied with several internal Palladium processes:

- **Onboarded all members of the project's technical leadership team** (see Annex B), including White Ribbon Alliance's Angela Nguku, Deputy Project Director, Maternal and Child Health and Bedan Wanene, Deputy Project Director, HIV/AIDS. For country programs, leadership staff are being recruited externally or transitioned over to PROPEL Health from other parts of the organization and will be in place for the next reporting period.
- **Developed a staffing matrix** with clear lines of reporting and scopes of work for each project staff position. Additionally, the project defined discrete roles and reporting lines for key personnel and the technical leadership and operations and finance teams (see Annex B).
- **Created email listservs** for PROPEL Health staff to ensure clear and consistent communication channels among project leadership and staff.

- **Held a kick-off meeting** in Washington, DC with PROPEL Health leadership, Palladium’s Contracts & Compliance team, and the PROPEL Health AOR and Office of Acquisition and Assistance team.
- **Held our first monthly AOR management meeting**; going forward, monthly meetings have been scheduled with the AOR team for country program support, core Office of Population and Reproductive Health activities, and management updates.
- **Shared a PROPEL Health project overview brief with USAID missions** in MCH, PEPFAR, Ouagadougou, and family planning priority countries. Staff based regionally and in countries that expressed interest in PROPEL gave presentations on the project and answered questions from USAID missions.

The project complied with several internal Palladium processes as part of project start-up, including developing various project **start-up resources, tools, and templates**; uploading PROPEL Health and its relevant details to Palladium’s internal **project registry**, per corporate policies; and developing a **sustainable business action plan** that aligns with PROPEL Health’s diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. The project also adapted Palladium’s grants manual and developed and submitted a **project management manual** on December 20, 2022, which outlines company procedures and project guidelines. This manual includes PROPEL Health financial, contractual, and operational processes that adhere to USAID regulations and will include country-specific annexes as field support buy-ins are received. The project developed detailed budget templates to be easily incorporated into workplans and created USAID reporting templates for monthly, quarterly, and annual financial reporting. PROPEL Health also developed a one-page document outlining its approach to achieving greater localization and tracking local organization funding.

Also this quarter, PROPEL Health **established Kenya and Togo offices**, moving leadership closer to Africa country programs. Deputy Project Director, HIV, Bedan Wanene, who resides at Palladium’s corporate Nairobi office, traveled to Botswana to assist with workplan preparation and meet USAID counterparts during the first quarter. West Africa Regional Director, Modibo Maiga, relocated to Togo to better respond to West Africa Mission priorities and continues to provide senior technical leadership in the area.

Finance and Operations

Partner Subawards and Grants Management

During the first 90 days of the project, all six USAID-approved PROPEL Health core partners at the time of the award were issued subawards with Palladium. The other named project partners were contacted and asked to submit due diligence documents, a unique entity identifier, and budget information necessary to submit their subawards to the AOR for approval in early 2023. The project anticipates that all seven project partners will have cost reimbursable subawards in place by the end of the second quarter. PROPEL Health also developed a detailed grants manual during the first quarter of the project. The project’s grant approach—along with training for staff to familiarize themselves with the grants program—will be available on SharePoint.

In-country Operations and Travel

During the project's first quarter, PROPEL Health developed job descriptions for in-country positions and began aggressively recruiting. The project team identified new office lease space, procured computers and furniture or received transferred used items, and created the working infrastructure between headquarter operations and in-country teams. PROPEL Health assigned a Project Delivery Associate to manage all international travel that needs AOR approval through Palladium's Egencia Travel system and Drum Cussac Global Risk Manager.

Financial Systems

In addition to employing its Costpoint financial system to track all project funding and transaction details, PROPEL Health developed a number of financial tools and resources during the project's first quarter. These resources include a user-friendly project budget template that allows for easy workplan data transfer, a detailed project forecast to project country and core spending, a template for quarterly SF-425 reporting and semi-annual baseline data, and other ad hoc templates to help country teams manage their finances. The PROPEL Health Director of Finance and Operations developed a cost-share questionnaire to be used with local organizations who will be receiving grant funds from PROPEL Health. The questionnaire will identify complimentary work that local recipients are performing that benefit and complement PROPEL Health objectives and further USAID's broader health objectives, thus, count toward the project's cost-share mandate.

Core Workplan

In the project's first quarter, PROPEL Health submitted its first FP/RH core workplan. The workplan, submitted on December 2, 2022, is awaiting final approval by the AOR team. It focuses on three types of activities: those needed to support the implementation of the project (such as communications and monitoring, evaluation, and learning), those that take an integrated policy, advocacy, financing, and governance approach to supporting country programs to achieve specific high-level results, and those that fall into specific PROPEL Health intermediate result (IR) technical areas.

Field Programs

As buy-ins are established, PROPEL Health works to develop and finalize country program workplans for submission to USAID. During the first quarter, the project developed country program workplans for Botswana, Ghana, Guatemala, and Malawi (see Figure 2) in consultation with the respective USAID Mission and the PROPEL technical leadership team to ensure workplans reflected country priorities and for continuity across the project. Where applicable, workplans were developed by the relevant Country Director, with engagement from the PROPEL Health technical leadership team and co-creation with in-country stakeholders and local partners. As the workplans are approved, PROPEL Health country teams are beginning recruitment and operational start-up and implementation.

Figure 2. PROPEL Health Country Programs



Communications and Knowledge Management

During the project's first quarter, the Communications and Knowledge Management team focused primarily on producing key deliverables and informational materials; laying the groundwork for the Hub for Global Excellence and Learning in Policy, Advocacy, Financing, and Governance (the Hub); and organizing an event to introduce the project to USAID staff (see Progress Report, previously).

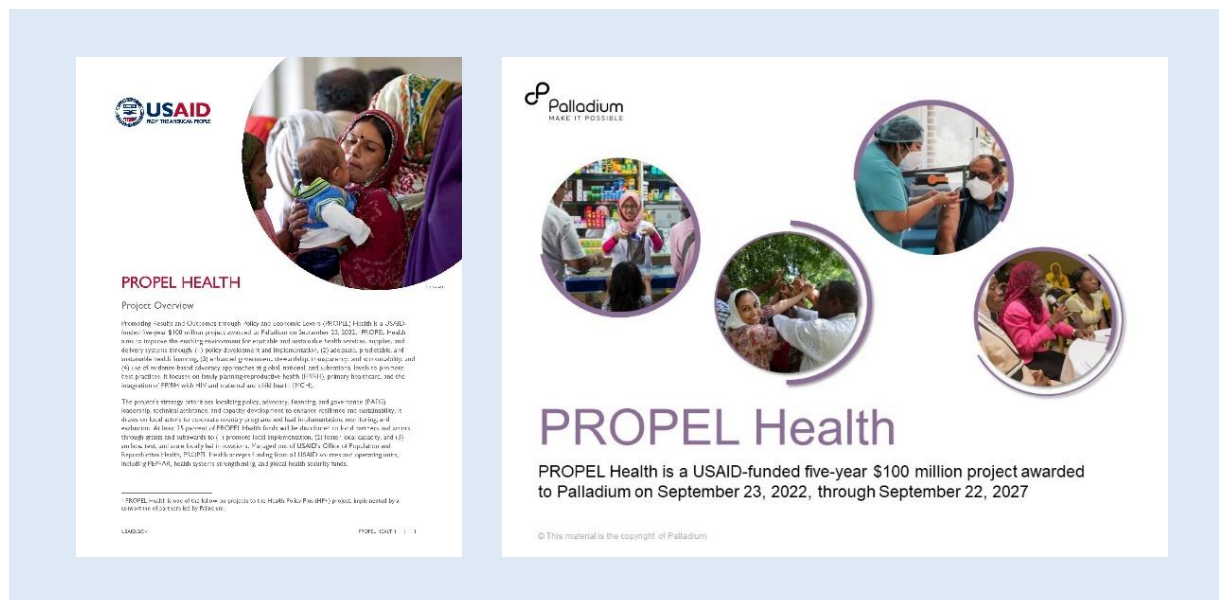
Branding and Marking Plan

PROPEL Health submitted a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan in accordance with USAID's Graphics Standards Manual on November 10, 2022. A revised plan, incorporating requested changes from USAID, was sent for approval on December 9, 2022. Once approved, the Communications and Knowledge Management team will develop and introduce to project staff a style guide and branding and marking package with a project look and feel and templates for workplans, reports, briefs, PowerPoints, and other collateral material. The team will deliver training to headquarter and country program staff to ensure appropriate use and all templates will be made available on internal sharing platforms, including the Hub, once developed.

Project Brief and Presentation

PROPEL Health developed a project overview brief and PowerPoint presentation that was shared with the AOR team and missions and used to orient staff on the project's design and objectives. The overview brief is available in English, French, and Spanish.

Figure 3. PROPEL Health Overview Brief and Presentation



The Hub

Under PROPEL Health, Palladium will create a user-friendly, web-based Hub. The Hub will have internally and externally facing functions to accelerate technical excellence; facilitate localization; and foster collaborating, learning, and adapting and innovation across countries, languages, and technical areas. The Hub will host resources, learning events (including webinars and policy forums), blogs, news stories, video, photographic essays, and other shareable information. To date, the project team has researched best practices in developing and managing dual internal and external knowledge management systems, including outreach to similar platforms (e.g., Knowledge Success) and conducted interviews with project leadership and other key stakeholders who will be involved in the Hub's conceptualization, development, and/or management. Project staff have developed a list of system requirements and are working with in-house digital solutions and system experts to explore platform options and cybersecurity parameters. Next steps will include selecting a platform or platforms, building out the Hub, and populating it.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting

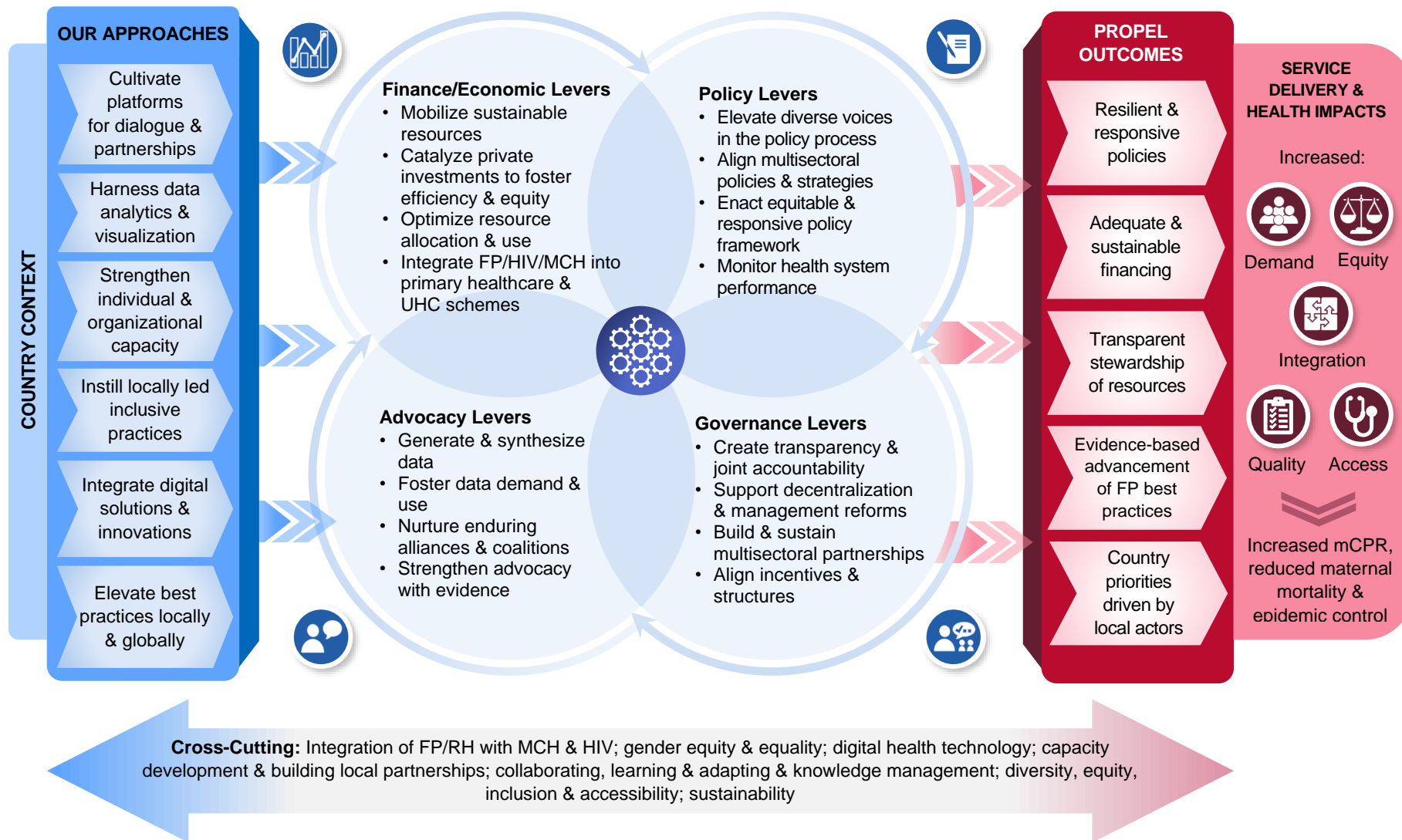
Monitoring outcomes is an essential aspect to ensuring that PROPEL Health is meeting its objectives. To facilitate this, PROPEL Health developed an Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP). The AMELP, which was submitted on December 20, 2022, aims to ensure that data is uniformly and accurately collected and aggregated from each country program so that PROPEL Health can summarize the project's overarching contributions and

impacts. Additionally, the AMELP was designed to facilitate the use of project data for collaboration and learning both at the country and project/global levels. It emphasizes monitoring, evaluation, collaboration, and learning as key mechanisms that support adaptive management to enable responsive, effective, and efficient project implementation. During the first quarter, PROPEL Health researched various management information system platforms and has begun generating mock-ups of how the project monitoring, evaluation, collaborating, learning, and adapting system will be designed.

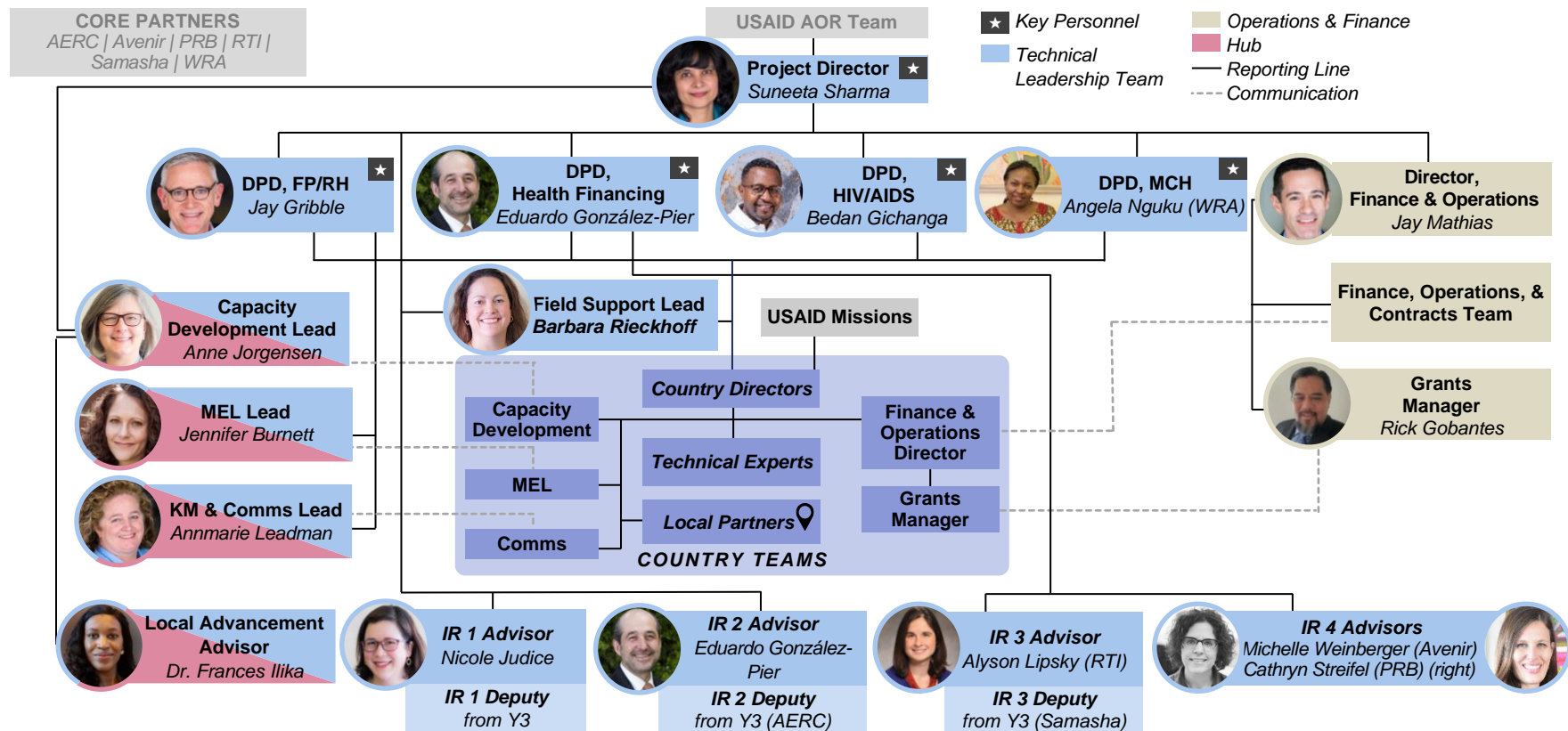
Gender

During the first quarter, PROPEL Health has been in the development phase of its gender strategy. To inform the strategy's development, PROPEL Health reviewed results of the 2022 Health Policy Plus gender integration activity to draw out key learning and recommendations to strengthen gender-integrated policy, advocacy, financing, and governance approaches. PROPEL Health consolidated the Health Policy Plus research and learning and identified data gaps to be filled by additional desk research. Project staff then developed a data collection plan and initiated a literature review. In the next quarter, PROPEL Health will finalize the desk research and gender analysis and use the results to co-create the gender strategy with PROPEL Health staff and partners. This process will include convening PROPEL Health country staff and the technical leadership team to provide input on gender strategy objectives, approaches, and implementation plan through meetings, reviews, and structured written comments. The resulting PROPEL Health Gender Strategy will be submitted to USAID in the second quarter, as required by the project's cooperative agreement.

Annex A. PROPEL Health Conceptual Framework



Annex B. PROPEL Health Organizational Chart



Hub for Global Excellence and Learning in PAFG

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| <p>FP/HIV Integration: Sandra Mapemba FP/MCH Integration: Alicia Cerrato</p> <p>Infectious Disease: Sara Bowsky Global Health Security: Reynaldo Flores</p> <p>Blended Finance: Roland Pearson Costing & Modelling: Stephen Forsythe (Avenir)</p> <p>DEIA: Jackie Urio Gender: Beth Rottach Youth: Gorrety Parmu (PRB)</p> <p>Digital Health: David Masese Macroeconomic Policy: Abebe Shimeles (AERC)</p> | <p>PAFG Experts:</p> <p>Derek Brinkerhoff (RTI) Emily Sonneveldt (Avenir) Eva Natsiko (RTI) Moses Muwonge (Samasha) Scholastica Odhiambo (AERC) Alana Barton (PRB)</p> | <p>Sara Stratton Ron MacInnis Modibo Maiga Erin McGinn Sayaka Koseki Kristy Kade (WRA)</p> |
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