



THE ETHIOPIA MNCH SCORECARD

Background

A Call to action

Ethiopia has made significant progress in the reduction of under-five mortality from 204 per 1000 live births (in 1990) to 68 (in 2013)¹, thus achieving MDG 4. Maternal mortality (420 per 100,000 live births in 2013) has also seen a significant drop from 1990 levels (1400), but is yet to reach the MDG 5 target of 350. Remaining on track to achieving and/or sustaining these results will be a challenge, but one that Ethiopia is set to overcome as it continues to prioritize women's and children's health services.

The Response

Ethiopia introduced a Maternal, Newborn & Child Health Management (MNCH) Tool as an accountability mechanism designed to enhance transparency and action on priority MNCH interventions. It enables Ethiopia to easily track and compare performance sub-nationally for priority indicators, while enhancing performance transparency, strengthening accountability and encouraging action. Ethiopia has been using the tool for over 2 years at federal ministerial level to enhance national and regional performance. The Federal Ministry also produces regional scorecards and quarterly reports.

In July 2014, the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) convened a 10 day exercise to identify opportunities to further strengthen the impact of Ethiopia's MNCH scorecard management tool. With the support of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA), information was collected through discussions, questionnaires and sharing of documentation and processes at Federal and Regional Ministry of Health levels. At federal level, this included the State Ministers, Directors, and HMIS staff. At regional level, this included senior management and technical staff from three regions.

Progress

To accelerate progress, MNCH scorecards have been issued each quarter since they were launched. The MNCH scorecard management tool is fully embedded and integrated into the existing and highly functional Ministry of Health management processes, data

¹http://www.countdown2015mnch.org/documents/2014Report/Ethiopia_Country_Profile_2014.pdf

tracking, and accountability & action frameworks at all levels. It is used at both technical and political levels, and this practice is replicated from federal, to regional, zonal and district level. The country is confident that this acceleration of progress is making results increasingly more positive.

Strengths of the Ethiopia MNCH scorecard

- At Federal level, the scorecard is shared with the Prime Minister and parliament and at Regional level, it is shared with regional presidents and parliaments significantly enhancing political engagement and understanding of key health issues.
- The civil service ministry has identified the MNCH scorecard as a best practice that can be replicated more broadly, beyond health and into other sectors, so that the leadership in accountability and action demonstrated by FMOH, can be expanded nationally.
- The scorecard has motivated increased action including enhanced resources targeting underperforming woredas (districts), enhanced technical assistance and capacity building and in-depth bottleneck analyses to identify root causes and better identify key actions to address them.
- Ethiopia continues to champion the development of a pan-Africa MNCH scorecard including the documentation of best practices in scorecard management.

In Oromia, when the first quarterly scorecard was issued, the regional president and parliament noted that skilled birth attendance was underperforming at around 24%. The regional president ordered all zonal health leaders to take immediate action to address this, and lobbied for rapid improvements. As a result, there was a rapid increase in coverage of skilled birth attendants to over 50% throughout the region, with some previously underperforming zones increasing coverage to over 75%.

Future actions

- Expanded access to the MNCH scorecard web platform to regional, zonal and woreda/district levels for further decentralization of the scorecards and capacity strengthening of staff at all levels to ensure the tool is fully utilized (i.e. training on managing the platform, interpreting the scorecard and responding to ensure appropriate action is taken).
- The incorporation of new data from the revised HMIS into the scorecard, including the use of private sector data, and community level data collected through innovative technologies including cell phones.

- The MNCH scorecard management tool will be incorporated into the pre-service training of Health Information Technologists (over 10,000 health information technicians are currently being rolled out to enhance the capacity of health workers in data collection and reporting, improving overall data availability, quality and timeliness).
- The WHO country office and Meles Zenawi Foundation will give maternal and newborn health awards to the best performing region in the country and best performing woreda in each region based on performance in the MNCH scorecard to further enhance visibility and help to highlight best practices.

Conclusion

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will require a consistent focus on accountability and results at all levels. The Ethiopia RMNCH scorecard provides a strong foundation for Ethiopia to build on as it transitions from the MDGs to the SDGs.