

Building National Evaluation Platform (NEP): *Malawi Experience*

NEC Meeting
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Istanbul, Turkey



Outline

1. Why NEP?
2. Establishing the structure to ask and answer priority evaluation questions
3. Example of NEP analysis
4. Disseminating findings
5. Promoting government ownership

WHY NEP?

Policymakers need answers to complex questions

How does the rapid economic growth happening in certain areas influence child health outcomes?

Did our new reproductive health strategy contribute to better maternal health outcomes?

Should we invest in scaling up a pilot intervention with promising results in a single region?

How many lives can be saved if we scale up an intervention over the next 5 years to improve coverage of an intervention by 20%?

Why did we reach MDG 4 but not MDG 5?

Are our nutrition interventions really reaching the poorest households?

New Evaluation Designs are Needed to Provide Answers

- Large-scale programs
- Evaluators do not control timetable or strength of implementation
- Multiple simultaneous programs with overlapping interventions and aims
- Contextual factors that cannot be anticipated
- Need for country capacity and local evidence to guide programming

Lancet, 2007

Learning from new initiatives in maternal and child health

We echo the points made by Chris Murray and colleagues.¹ In fact, our views were accepted as a Comment in *The Lancet* early in July, and were waiting for a publication slot.

Most low-income countries are making slow progress in improving child and maternal survival—too slow to achieve the fourth and fifth Millennium Development

Newborn & Child Health has selected Burkina Faso, Malawi, and Mozambique as jump-start countries for coordinated action to support country plans for the rapid scale-up of high-impact interventions.

Bilateral agencies from the USA, UK, Canada, Sweden, and several other high-income countries are supporting

Bulletin of WHO, 2009

Evaluating child survival programmes

Cesar G Victora,^a Robert E Black^a & Jennifer Bryce^b

Renewed global interest in newborn and child survival has generated many programmes in low- and middle-income countries. There is an urgent need for a common evaluation framework to allow

that this traditional design seldom allows valid attribution in the current development context. "Unouched" comparison areas are rarely available because multiple child survival interventions are being

conducted, economic surveys, poverty maps, service availability surveys, etc. 2) Conduct an initial survey, to be repeated every three years or so, to measure coverage levels for chosen

Bellagio Meeting & Lancet, 2010

Health Policy

Measuring impact in the Millennium Development Goal era and beyond: a new approach to large-scale effectiveness evaluations

Cesar G Victora, Robert E Black, J Ties Boerma, Jennifer Bryce

Evaluation of large-scale programmes and initiatives aimed at improvement of health in countries of low and middle income needs a new approach. Traditional designs, which compare areas with and without a given programme, are no longer relevant at a time when many programmes are being scaled up in virtually every district in the world. We propose an evolution in evaluation design: a national platform approach that uses the district as the unit of design

Published Online
July 9, 2010
DOI:10.1016/S0140-6736(10)60810-0

Sources: Victora CG, Bryce JB, Black RE. Learning from new initiatives in maternal and child health. *Lancet* 2007; **370** (9593): 1113-4.

Victora CG, Black RE, Bryce J. Evaluating child survival programs. *Bull World Health Organ* 2009; **87**: 83.

Victora CG, Black RE, Boerma JT, Bryce J. Measuring impact in the MDG era and beyond: A new approach to large-scale effectiveness evaluations. *Lancet* 2011.

National Evaluation Platform (NEP) equips government decision-makers with the tools and skills to critically evaluate the state of maternal, newborn, and child health and nutrition (MNCH&N) in their countries. Empowered with evidence, policy and program leaders can make strategic decisions that lead to maximum health and nutrition impact for women and children.



Global Affairs Canada funded NEP for MNCH&N project

With 3 y (+ 3m) of initial support (Aug 2013 – Oct 2016)*:

1. Develop NEP approach in Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, and Tanzania and build local institutional capacity to use and maintain the platform
2. Demonstrate that NEPs can provide high-quality, timely data on results and implementation strength for use in guiding decisions
3. Use the experience to develop guidelines and tools for additional countries

**NCE extend to Dec 2017*

ESTABLISHING THE NEP STRUCTURE

NEP structure

- NEP is a partnership among the Malawi National Statistical Office, Ministry of Health (MOH), and Johns Hopkins University
- MOH identifies priority MNCH&N policy questions
- NEP answers policy questions by collecting relevant data, analyzing data, and disseminating findings



NEP Malawi structure

HIGH-LEVEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HLAC)

- Chief of Health Services
- Directors: Policy & Planning; Nutrition; Reproductive Health; Research; Economic Planning & Development; Youth
- Team Leader – Public Health Institute of Malawi
- Deputy Directors: Preventive; Clinical (Nutrition)
- Program Managers (EPI, IMCI, Malaria, ARI)
- National Coordinator – Child Protection (Gender)
- NSO Commissioner



DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS



TECHNICAL TASK TEAM (TTT)

- NSO Deputy Commissioner
- Program and M&E technical staff from
 - MOH (CMED, IMCI, Malaria, RHD, Nutrition)
 - Department of Nutrition HIV/AIDS (DNHA)
 - Economic Planning: Save the Children



SCIENTIFIC & DATA PARTNERS

NEP HOME INSTITUTION: National Statistical Office of Malawi
Special collaboration with CMED for enhanced ownership and sustainability
Technical guidance from Johns Hopkins University – Institute for International Programs

EXAMPLE OF NEP ANALYSIS

Impact of proposed nutrition strategy on stunting reduction

Government of Malawi, Department of Nutrition and HIV/AIDS (DNHA) was developing the National Nutrition Strategic Plan (NNSP) 2015-2020:

- Plan sought to accelerate stunting reduction in Malawi (reduce stunting by half over the next 10 years: 42.4% in 2014 to 22.8% in 2025)
- Draft plan lacked evidence of **expected impact of strategy** on stunting reduction
- Draft plan lacked evidence of **key stunting reduction drivers for prioritization purposes**

NEP policy question

If Malawi scales up coverage of key nutrition-specific and WASH interventions by 2025, what impact will that have on stunting?

SCENARIO A

Scale interventions to reach targets proposed in the strategy

SCENARIO B

Scale interventions to 100% coverage to show the maximum potential benefit

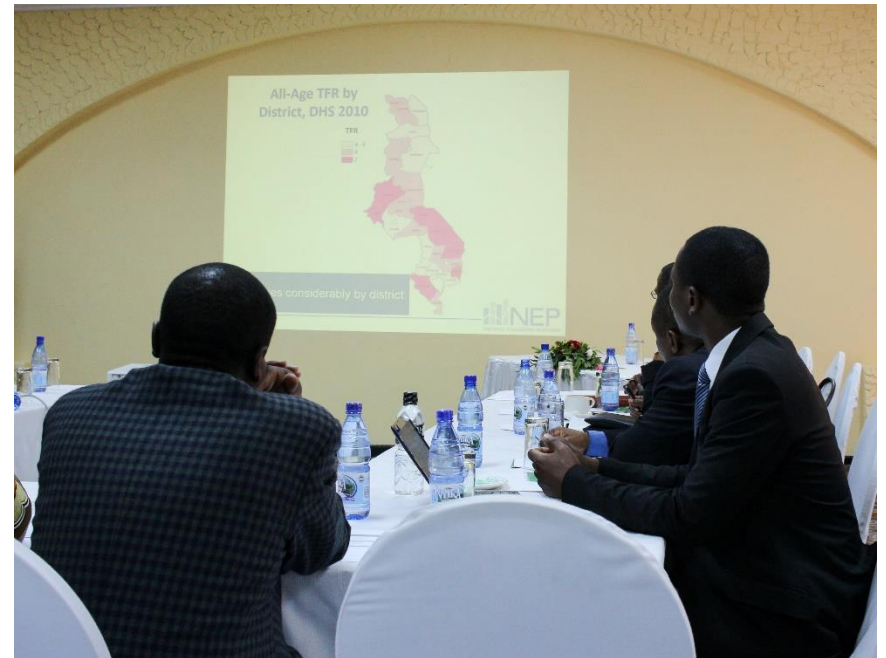
How were findings used?

- Revised NNSP to include additional “high impact” nutrition-specific & nutrition-sensitive interventions given gap between desired and projected impact
- Revised some targets that were substantially misaligned with past trends on similar/or related complementary service indicators
- Strengthened evidence for multi-sectoral nutrition advocacy and improving policy harmonization and coordination with related sectors, such as Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
- Alongside evidence from other studies (COHA, PROFILES, etc), NEP findings have been used as inputs in the development of a nutrition advocacy strategy that emphasizes the importance of nutrition and nutrition-sensitive interventions in Malawi’s development agenda

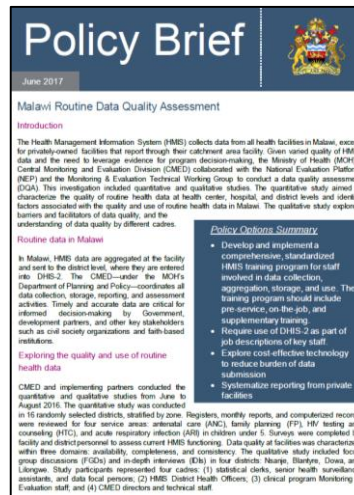
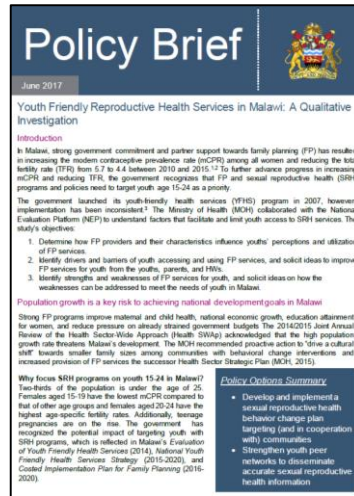
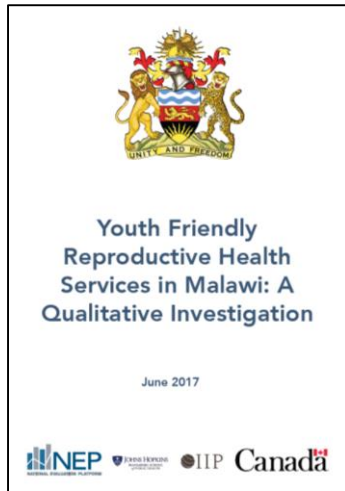
DISSEMINATING FINDINGS

Dissemination audiences

1. Thematic/Technical Working Groups (TWGs)
2. Ministry of Health Senior Management Team
3. Annual Stakeholder Meetings
4. Parliamentarians
5. Knowledge Translation Platform (KTP)



Dissemination products



- Youth family planning qualitative study report
- Youth family planning policy brief
- Data quality assessment (DQA) quantitative and qualitative study reports
- DQA national and zonal-level policy briefs

PROMOTING GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP

Aspects of NEP's sustainability

- **Government-led**
 - *NSO and MOH lead NEP implementation*
- **Builds on and extends existing data systems** at country level
 - NEP leverages existing survey and routine data and collects new data when necessary
- **Provides timely answers** to decision makers
 - NEP's work is driven by priority evaluation questions from MOH
- **Facilitates global and national accountability reporting** (e.g., WHA, SUN, CoIA)
 - NEP has specifically informed nutrition strategy in Malawi and findings are directly relevant to achieving MDG targets



NEP

NATIONAL EVALUATION PLATFORM

Thank you!

