

Insights and Lessons Learned from the African Collaborative for Health Financing Solutions' Capacity Building Approach



AFRICAN COLLABORATIVE
FOR HEALTH FINANCING
SOLUTIONS



CONTEXT AND INTERVENTION

Capacity building is a key 'tenet' under the ACS project's theory of change. It is a complex, multi-layered process through which individuals, organisations, and societies mobilize their own capabilities for driving structural changes and managing their own sustainable development processes.

ACS recognizes that for health systems interventions to be sustainable, building individual and organisational capacity is essential. Strengthening stakeholders' capacity to adapt and apply tools and methodologies to country context is not as straightforward as it sounds, and constructive discussions and action on learning are held back by the lack of a shared and comprehensive understanding.

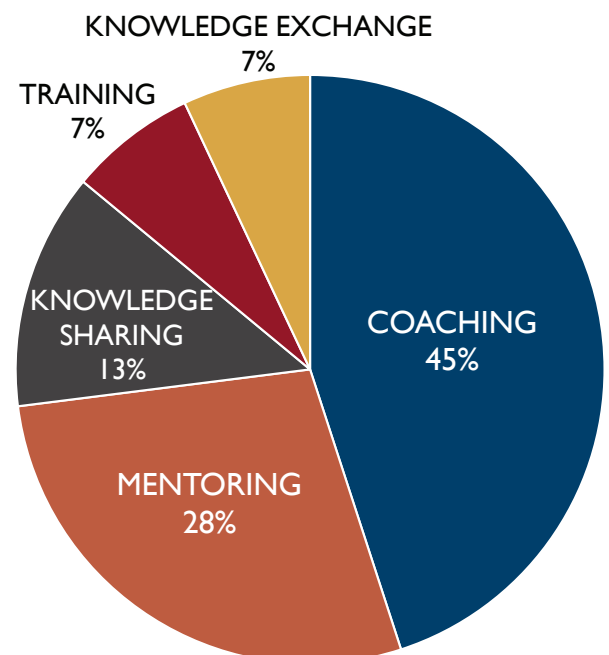
A study focused on filling this gap by examining five capacity building approaches used by the ACS project (coaching, mentoring, training, knowledge sharing, and knowledge exchange) and presenting lessons learned from this experience on strengthening UHC stakeholders' ability to adapt and apply tools and methodologies. The authors of the study aimed to provide a framework for understanding the individual and organizational level of capacity building, and finally pull learnings on what has and hasn't worked to inform future capacity building strategies.

The figure below shows the frequency with which each capacity building approach was used across different types of activities. Of the 40 stratified ACS activities, 73 percent of them were implemented using coaching and/or mentoring capacity building approaches.

FREQUENCY OF EACH ACS CAPACITY BUILDING APPROACH

To reach its objectives, ACS often used a hybrid strategy of combining multiple approaches.

While 35 percent of the stratified activities had only one approach, the other 65 percent combined between two and five implementation approaches. Namibia and Botswana are the countries that combined the highest number of capacity building approaches.



TRAINING

- Increases participants' beliefs (or confidence) in their capability to adapt and apply knowledge
- Assessing individual and organizational improvement in capacity is needed to determine progress in knowledge adaptation and application
- Critical mass of local technical experts who can contribute expertise and generate evidence through a particular process; also crucial that such capacity is aligned to health system priorities
- Sustained commitment, interest, and organizational support for those who incorporate knowledge as acquired into their daily practices
- Linking training to participants' professional or work-based tasks is directly associated with increased confidence in knowledge adaptation and application
- Training efforts have better results when there is flexibility and time

KNOWLEDGE SHARING


- Knowledge sharing is enabled by peer learning networks e.g., from other government agencies and academics
- Knowledge sharing efforts are often effective when facilitated by local knowledge brokers with sufficient understanding of political agendas and priorities
- Availability of financial resources is crucial for sustainability of knowledge adaptation and application

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

- Openness towards collaboration across organisations can have a major impact on the success of knowledge application
- Knowledge exchange requires creating settings conducive to interactions or relationship-building, which can augment knowledge adaptation through social learning

COACHING AND MENTORING

- Coaching and mentoring should not be a one-off but a continuous process happening over a period of time, supporting confidence building among stakeholders in their ability to adapt knowledge
- Coaching and mentoring plays a facilitative role in contextualising evidence to the specific practice issues participants were facing
- Similar to the training approach, coaching and mentoring requires individual and organisational support

 These findings draw four key enabling factors in strengthening stakeholders' abilities to adapt and apply knowledge to a country context: (a) committed relationships among key stakeholders and an enabling environment to foster such interactions, (b) access to evidence and technical assistance (c) in-country demand for capacity building, and (d) ample financial resources to carry out the capacitation strategy.



This guide is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this guide are the sole responsibility of Results for Development, Duke, Feed the Children, Amref, Synergos, RAME, RESADE, CERRHUD, and UHF and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.