Number of instances where health knowledge needs assessments among intended users are conducted

Indicator Number: 2

Logic Model Component: Processes

Data Type(s): Count, qualitative

Short Definition: Captures the instances where assessments are conducted to identify gaps between current and desired conditions

Definition and Explanation (Long): This indicator refers to a needs assessment, which is a systematic process for identifying gaps between current and desired conditions and determining how to close them. It involves taking inventory of needs, prioritizing them, and developing solutions to address them (Altschuld & Kumar, 2009; Gupta, 2007). In the context of KM for global health, there are two main levels of users: a) in-country partner organizations and b) their clients, health-care consumers. Thus, conducting knowledge needs assessments among in-country partner organizations helps the in-country organization become aware of its knowledge assets/needs and helps the partner organization see where support to KM would be most beneficial for the partner and the clients they serve.

Data Requirements: Self-report of number and type of needs assessments conducted

Data Sources: Administrative/programmatic records

A number of methodologies can help technical assistance projects understand the KM needs of their in-country partners/clients. These include environmental scans, literature reviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, and network mapping. Network mapping, or Net-Map, is a social mapping tool in which respondents work with interviewers to address a key question and create a network map of actors related to the question or topic of inquiry.

Frequency of Data Collection:
Purpose:

A health knowledge needs assessment among intended users is an important first step in planning KM activities and/or technical assistance. It helps organizations and projects determine their knowledge resources, knowledge flow, and knowledge needs and captures the current capacity of KM systems in a certain country, region, community, or topic area, such as among HIV/AIDS policy-makers. An assessment of current capacity informs the design of activities to strengthen and improve the systems of the in-country partner (K4Health, 2011). Once organizational or partner needs and problems are clearly defined, resources can then be dedicated to closing knowledge gaps and developing practical solutions.

Issues and Challenges:

The information generated by a knowledge needs assessment is context-specific. Therefore, a new needs assessment should be conducted in each new setting—country, region, etc.—and with each group of intended users, such as program managers and policy makers. Furthermore, when conducting an assessment of KM in the health-care system, it is important to examine its various administrative levels—national, regional, district, and community, for example—to understand the differing needs at each level, current information flows with and between levels, and barriers to and opportunities for knowledge exchange between levels of the health system. Project staff can collect data about knowledge gaps, health information networks, preferred methods of communication, existing tools and technology, flow of information, barriers to knowledge exchange, and current infrastructure (K4Health, 2011). Considering the quickly changing nature of technology and potentially limited access to it in low- and mid-income countries, knowledge needs should be continuously monitored to ensure that KM programs are taking advantage of new and improved technology, as appropriate.

Resources:

For detailed guidance for each of the methodologies mentioned above (Issues and Challenges), see the K4Health Guide to Conducting Health Information Needs Assessments: http://www.k4health.org/resources/k4health-guide-conducting-needs-assessments.... Further instructions on Net-Map can be found at http://netmap.wordpress.com/.

Pages in the Guide:

20-21

Published Year:

2013

Last Updated Date:

Wednesday, September 6, 2017