

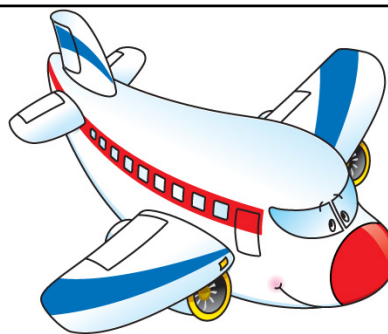


## UNICEF Engagement with Disease Control



- UNICEF primarily engages at response and program levels, not clinical research, with a focus on mothers and children and equity.
- For example in vector diseases – Zika, Yellow Fever, Malaria
- For other outbreaks – Ebola, Cholera
- For broader disease control – TB, HIV & Malaria, Pneumonia and Diarrhoea, Newborn Sepsis, Antimicrobial Resistance, etc.
- *Particularly in Outbreaks and Humanitarian Emergencies we have limited capacity for research – We started our 1<sup>st</sup> IR in a Humanitarian Setting in Cox's Bazaar in 2019*

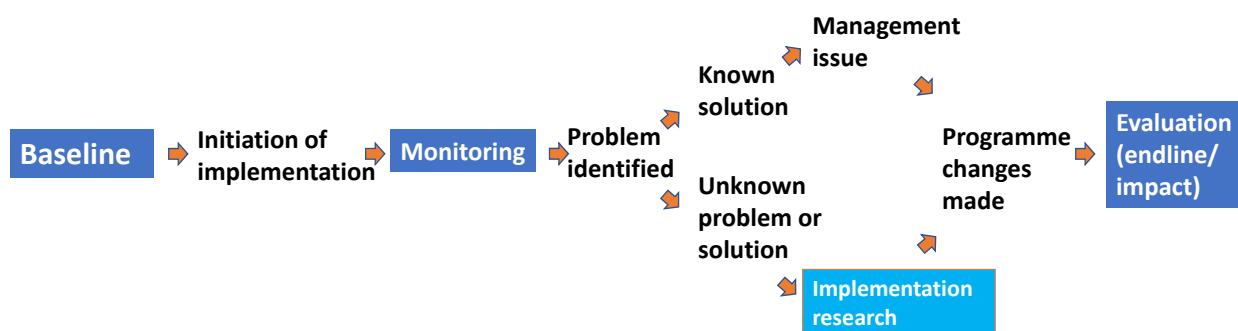
## Implementation Research at UNICEF



“Implementation Research is like fixing the plane while you are flying it, rather than waiting till the end line evaluation crash”

**Professor Stefan Petersen**  
OAD, Health Section, UNICEF

## Where Implementation Research fits within the programme cycle





## Implementation Research at UNICEF

“There are good opportunities for integrating implementation research into programs and their design, and in some circumstances the research can be done in a way that can provide relatively quick feedback loops to adjust program design in **real time**.”

Ted Chaiban

Director Programme Division UNICEF

## Approach

Our implementation research activities are **“embedded”** within programmes to better understand factors that **influence and improve implementation** for health systems strengthening

Meaningful engagement/leadership by practitioner/decision-maker

Alignment of research activities with the implementation, funding and policy cycles, and continuity of engagement

Reduce overreliance on external consultants and rather **promote local capacity** – linking capacity for implementers to local researchers

Use IR as a driver for change

## Some Examples:

DELIR: <https://sites.google.com/view/delir-workshop-2018/home>

Pakistan IR: <https://sites.google.com/view/pakistanirforepi/home>

DELIR: <http://www.who.int/alliance-hpsr/projects/dmir/en/>

### Decision-Maker Led Implementation Research (DELIR)

- 14 projects were supported in 10 Gavi priority countries: 2 rounds – 2015-2016 & 2016-2017
- Topics: vaccination coverage, demand, health and delivery systems for vaccines)



*DELIR Data Analysis and Dissemination Workshop, Geneva, April 2018*

### Pakistan IR for immunization

- Single-country model to link better with in-country processes focusing questions through the JA and EPI reviews and linking with GAVI support processes like HSS and TCA.
- Topics: use of CHWs, polio synergy, supportive supervision, social mobilization, governance



*IR teams in Pakistan shared their results with Health Minister of Pakistan in March 2018*

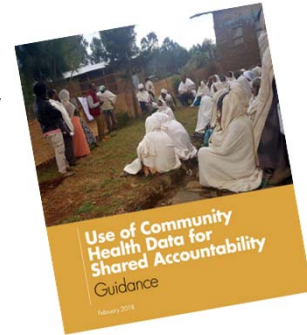
## Challenges

- Senior leaders have sometimes needed convincing on approach
- Challenges sometimes in aligning policy and funding cycles with studies
- Implementers and researchers often overly ambitious or still want to pursue traditional research
- Teams face political, cultural and social difficulties
- Ethical approval process onerous and conflict with aligning with cycles – Ethical Review Committees often don't understand IR
- Many research teams require ongoing technical support



## Successes – Real-Time use of Findings

- **Nigeria:** Integration of participatory action research approach into existing social mobilization structures in areas with pockets of unimmunized children. The research team developed policy and supporting documents to guide policy makers in this effort.
- **Ethiopia:** Improvement of data quality and use within the existing health information system through community engagement. The team used their research findings to develop guidance on the use of community health data for shared accountability
- **India:** Examined how to counter anti-vaccine propaganda lead to a revised communication strategy, including a mobile social media app.



**Programme or policy changes/improvements are the objective of IR**

## Implementation Research on Prevention of HIV transmission from Mother to Child in Malawi

### Study Rationale: Implementer Question

- To assist the **Malawi Ministry of Health (MOH) and mothers2mothers (m2m)** to develop adolescent-focused PMTCT and mentor mother programming

### Study Questions

- Appropriateness & Acceptability of mentor mother programme for adolescents mothers living with HIV

### Methods

- Qualitative Focus Groups

**5 months study - July protocol development to December 2017 presentation @ ICASA**

**Total cost US\$15,000**

### Use of Research Findings

- **From January 2018 in response, m2m modified its intervention to include Adolescent Champions**

PLOS ONE

RESEARCH ARTICLE

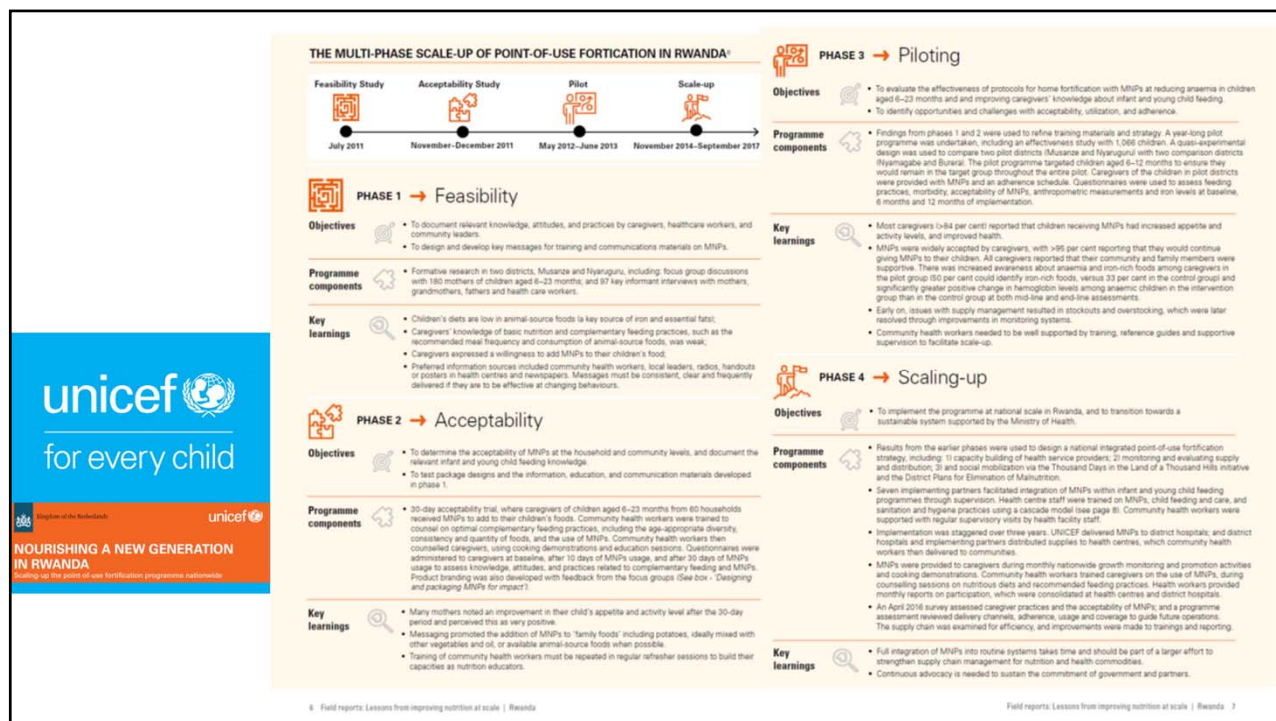
"I would love if there was a young woman to encourage us, to ease our anxiety which we would have if we were alone": Adapting the Mothers2Mothers Mentor Mother Model for adolescent mothers living with HIV in Malawi

Nicole B. Carbone<sup>1</sup>, Joseph Njila<sup>2</sup>, Debra J. Jackson<sup>3,4</sup>, Michael T. Eliya<sup>5</sup>, Chileshe Chilangwa<sup>6</sup>, Jennifer Tsoka<sup>7</sup>, Tasila Zulu<sup>7</sup>, Jacqueline R. Chinkonde<sup>8</sup>, Judith Sherman<sup>9</sup>, Chifundo Zimba<sup>9</sup>, Innocent A. Mofolo<sup>1</sup>, Michael E. Herce<sup>1,2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of North Carolina Project Malawi, Lilongwe, Malawi, <sup>2</sup> UNICEF-New York, New York, New York, United States of America, <sup>3</sup> School of Public Health, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa, <sup>4</sup> Department of HIV and AIDS, Ministry of Health, Government of the Republic of Malawi, Lilongwe, Malawi, <sup>5</sup> Mothers2Mothers Malawi, Lilongwe, Malawi, <sup>6</sup> UNICEF Malawi, Lilongwe, Malawi, <sup>7</sup> Institute for Global Health & Infectious Diseases, Department of Medicine, University of North Carolina School of Medicine, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States of America







“Every year, three to five thick reports with a long list of recommendations are brought on my table, I seldom get a chance to skim through them, but this time, I am co-producing the required knowledge....”

-Pakistan EPI manager



## Objectives of the Implementation Research (IR) initiative Cox's Bazar

- Identify key implementation challenges of MNCH programmes in Cox's Bazar (particularly for FDMNs)
- Explore potential solutions of those challenges and ensure their utilization in the Rohingya refugee crisis through engagement of decision-makers
- Develop guidance on IR approach for Emergency/Crisis Settings

**Collaborators:** James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University and UNICEF Regional Office South Asia, Bangladesh Country Office and IDRS unit NYHQ

IR in Cox's Bazar – UNICEF | for every child

## Context specific challenges

Emergency situation-magnitude of the problems have been changing time to time along with service provision modalities

More than 100 organizations are working with their own objectives and priorities-often, lack of coordination is an issue

UN agencies seem to play key role rather than government

'Sustainability' of the programmes is not the aim of GoB

Language barrier

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## UNICEF IR Links to TDR IR

- Co-Sponsor Global Conference on Implementation Science, 29 June –1 July 2019, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- WHO (TDR, AHPSR, HRP) with UNICEF and World Bank on IR for UHC – Ethiopia, Nepal and India, possible expansion to other GFF countries and joint UHC/PHC priority countries
- Engagement with GFF/USAID Implementation Research Coalition
- IRDS Plans for 2019 to develop a roster of individual and institutional consultants in IR – link to Sort-IT graduates and TDR Research Hubs
- Direct linkages on AMR research
- Assuring TDR research includes children in key programmes, e.g. TB, Malaria, AMR
- Other current areas of UNICEF IR: Immunization, GIS, Birth registration, Maternal-Newborn, HIV, Nutrition, Emergencies, Adolescent Health, Child Protection Case Management

