

Summary report on the

**Training course on fostering
change to scale up best policy and
programme practices in
family planning**

Rabat, Morocco
31 May–3 June 2010



**World Health
Organization**

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1. Introduction

A training course on fostering change to scale up best policy and programme practices in family planning was held in Rabat, Morocco, from 31 May to 3 June 2010. The objectives of the training course were to:

- Review and exchange relevant experience in identifying, documenting and scaling up best practices of national family planning programmes;
- Introduce concepts and develop skills of participants in ‘change management’ based on principles of the guide for fostering change to scale up effective health services;
- Revise and strengthen national workplans for scaling up best practices in family planning in the Member States;
- Scale up the level of implementation of various effective policy and programme practices in family planning in countries of the Region.

The training course was organized by the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO EMRO) and attended by 40 participants from 10 Member States, as well as from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Extending Service Delivery Project (USA) Management Sciences for Health, Partners in Population and Development, Africa Regional Office (PPD/ARO), along with WHO staff from WHO headquarters and Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean.

Dr Ramez Mahaini, Coordinator, Family and Community Health, WHO EMRO inaugurated the course and noted that during the past two decades WHO and other partner agencies, including UNFPA, UNICEF, USAID, IPPF had sponsored numerous successful programmes and

activities for promoting reproductive health in countries of the Region. However, contraceptive prevalence rates remained extremely low in many Member States. This placed a significant burden on reproductive health situation in the Region, specifically in MDG priority countries, which in turn undermined the health and well-being of mothers and their children in the Region. Based on the outcome of a regional workshop on implementation of best practices in family planning, held in Jordan in September 2009, the training course was designed to develop national capacity in fostering change to scale up effective reproductive health behaviour and services, by providing knowledge and developing skills of participants to apply evidence-based change practices to identify, introduce, adapt and scale up best policy and programme practices in family planning.

It was expected that the technical support provided to countries to build national capacities in scaling-up policy and programme practices in family planning would contribute to accelerating the reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality and hence achieving the targets of Millenium Development Goals 4 and 5.

Dr Abderrahmane Maaroufi, Director, National Institute of Health Administration, represented the Ministry of Health of Morocco at the opening of the course. In his address, Dr Maaroufi noted that family planning was considered a priority programme for promoting maternal and child health in Morocco and expressed the need for building on successful national experiences of Member States and advanced evidence-based guidelines of WHO and other concerned international organizations.

The course methodology included working with the participants into four main themes focusing on the following areas: 1) the current situation in terms of fostering the change, achievements and challenges in the participating countries; 2) leading and managing change and

identifying and documenting “best” practices; 3) developing implementation and monitoring plans; and 4) developing country workplans. In addition to WHO secretariat, the course was facilitated by:

- Ms Kristen Stelljes, Management Sciences for Health, USA;
- Ms Milka Dinev, Extending Service Delivery Project, USA;
- Dr Salwa Bitar, Extending Service Delivery Project, USA;
- Ms Shawn Malarcher, USAID, USA; and
- Ms Nandita Thatte, USAID, USA.

2. Summary of proceedings

During the course, draft country workplans for fostering change to scale up family planning services in the participating countries were developed, and the course was concluded with a plenary discussion for determining future steps to support the implementation of the developed country workplans. The draft country workplans developed were focused on the following fields.

Afghanistan: expanding IUD use in 3 provinces

Djibouti: determining supportive factors for improving family planning practices

Egypt: integrating family planning in maternal and child health services

Islamic Republic of Iran: providing a larger basket of contraceptives

Morocco: improving IUD use

Pakistan: improving the quality of family planning services of lady health workers in Sindh

Somalia: advocating for family planning among stakeholders

Sudan: expanding family planning service delivery cadre

Tunisia: improving the use of emergency pills

Yemen: improving counselling in family planning services

UNRWA: improving family planning counselling skills of health providers

The training course highlighted the diversity of the situation of family planning programmes in Member States and the need to address the identified requirements in accordance with each country context building on synergy among the concerned UN and international organizations active in supporting family planning programmes in the Region. Nonetheless, the following issues were repeatedly raised during discussions as priority areas for improving the performance of family planning programmes:

- Building the capacity of service providers, especially in counselling
- Advocating for the benefits of birth-spacing especially among religious leaders
- Commodity security.

3. Next steps

1. Participating country teams should finalize the workplans drafted in the training course in consultation with the concerned national officers and submit the final draft country workplans to the Regional Office no later than 15 July 2010.
2. The Regional Office should review the submitted final draft country workplans and provide technical input to the participating countries in coordination with IBP partners and no later than 12 August 2010.
3. WHO in collaboration with IBP secretariat should facilitate securing necessary support for operationalizing the approved country workplans to scale up best policy and programme practices in family planning in the participating countries.

4. Member States should designate focal points to follow up on adoption, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the approved country workplans.
5. WHO and all other partners should work closely to align and harmonize their support to Member States to scale-up family planning programmes within the national primary health care systems.