

Health Care Providers Gain Access to Up-To-Date Guidelines

SUMMARY:

Kenyan health professionals often lack ready access to the latest reproductive health policies, guidelines, and references needed to deliver high-quality health services. In addition, the general public lacks awareness about reproductive health services provided by the Kenya Division of Reproductive Health (DRH). The DRH responded to these knowledge gaps by redesigning and updating their national website.

PROJECT DATES:

August 2010-January 2012

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Program managers, academics, researchers, service providers, and the general public

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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CONTEXT

Health professionals in Kenya, as in other developing countries, often lack access to up-to-date, practical, evidence-based information. Barriers to access include poor or non-existent Internet access; a shortage of high-quality, locally relevant health information, materials, and tools; and a lack of systems to search for and share information and knowledge.

The Knowledge for Health (K4Health) project aims to provide health professionals around the world with easy access to the health information and knowledge that they need. A major activity of the K4Health project is the development of online toolkits that contain important resources on particular health topics that are vetted and selected by technical experts. The toolkit platform features unique, user-friendly web software developed by K4Health that allows organizations to develop and update online toolkits without the need for specialized information technology (IT) skills.

SPECIFIC KM ANGLE

As of 2010, the website of the Kenya Division of Reproductive Health (DRH) had not been updated since 2006. Updating the website was a cumbersome process, which involved toting a CD with the updated materials across town. In addition, many people, including DRH staff and other health professionals, “were not aware that the DRH had a website,” said Dr. Marsden Solomon, associate director of FHI 360-Kenya. As a result, Kenyan health professionals lacked centralized access to high-quality, up-to-date policies and

guidelines in reproductive health, and the general public lacked information about DRH programs and services.

In mid-2010, K4Health staff met with Kenyan Ministry of Health (MoH) officials and other partners to discuss their needs pertaining to the DRH website.

The MoH decided to redesign and revamp the DRH website using the K4Health Toolkit platform because it is inexpensive, easy-to-use and update, and requires minimal technical support and skills.

After DRH technical staff and members of the Family Planning Technical Working Group concurred with the plan, DRH Director Dr. Bashir Isaak identified key DRH technical staff to work with FHI 360 to move the process forward. These technical staff identified four objectives for the redesigned DRH website:

- To promote the DRH’s programmatic and technical strengths
- To promote information sharing among partners on best practices in reproductive health and family planning
- To provide health professionals, the public, and the media with easy-to-find information about the DRH its services
- To enhance internal and external DRH communication

Knowledge Management (KM) Case Study

An FHI 360-Kenya consultant wrote the new website page text, which was reviewed and edited for technical soundness by FHI 360. DRH staff reviewed and approved the new text and resources to be uploaded, which included national DRH policies, strategies, guidelines and reports.

Using GoToMeeting, K4Health staff trained two DRH staff and three FHI 360-Kenya staff on how to use the toolkit content management software to revise page text and remove or upload documents as needed to keep the toolkit current.

The national DRH website went live in January 2012 (www.drh.go.ke). It was formally launched on March 7, 2012, at a meeting with more than 150 invited attendees, including the press, provincial health directors, and representatives of partner organizations. Several national guidelines and strategy documents were launched at the same time, including the first national guidelines on reproductive tract cancers and a cervical cancer strategic plan. DRH staff distributed bookmarks to improve awareness about the revamped website.

AFTER ACTION REVIEW

Monitoring and evaluation

Approximately 80 up-to-date documents and resources were uploaded to the revamped website. The website provides access to Kenya-specific reproductive health resources as well as links to global K4Health Toolkits on family planning and reproductive health topics. The website is now fully owned and hosted by the Kenya DRH. Between March (the formal launch) and July 2012, it received 4,205 pageviews and 2,951 unique pageviews.

What worked well

The Kenya MoH's partnership with FHI 360, based on trust built over years of collaboration, was crucial for the project's success, said Dr. Solomon. "Good leadership and having a participatory process are critical ingredients for developing an online Toolkit," he notes, "because these ensure quality and broad-based information that fulfill the needs of the users." Other elements of the project that facilitated success include:

- Effective technical support from K4Health staff
- Commitment of the Kenyan DRH to revamp its website and participation by the DRH technical staff
- Open communication and trust among all partners

The K4Health Toolkit platform *"is an immense help,"* said Caroline Mackenzie, research associate at FHI 360-Kenya. *"It is now very easy to upload information and resources to the website."*

Challenges and obstacles

Due to competing responsibilities and priorities, DRH staff were delayed by several months in reviewing the website content. Staff turnover at FHI 360 in the middle of the project also caused delays. The original six-month time frame allotted to the project had to be extended to 12 months.

FHI 360-Kenya staff sent frequent reminders to DRH staff to complete reviews, which helped keep the momentum going. FHI 360-Kenya staff also took the initiative to select resources and to draft web pages for DRH to review.

Using GoToMeeting to conduct training was an economical choice, but some face-to-face training would have been helpful.

Staff turnover at DRH has been an ongoing issue. Staff who had received training on how to use the website content management system have now left their positions. New DRH staff will need to be trained so the DRH can continue to update and maintain the site.

Home page of the DRH website.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHERS

After implementing the three-year program, the team provided the following recommendations for others.

1. Collaborate at all levels

Developing a website requires good leadership and commitment, and the process should be participatory.

2. Take time to develop page text and select the best resources

Allocate sufficient time in the project schedule for developing content for web pages and for selecting and reviewing new resources.

3. Plan for maintenance

Ensure that workplans and job descriptions are revised to include maintenance of the website, in addition to creating or redesigning the website.

This case study was prepared by Cornelia Lee, Instructional Design Associate, FHI 360.

Informed by real life experiences implementing knowledge management (KM) activities within health and development organizations, these case studies highlight strategies, challenges, successes, lessons learned, and recommendations for others. They were written by members of the Global Health Knowledge Collaborative (GHKC) and were produced by Knowledge for Health (K4Health), with support from USAID's Office of Population and Reproductive Health, Bureau for Global Health. The GHKC is a community of practice whose main purpose is sharing and synthesizing knowledge among practitioners of KM within the field of global health and development. K4Health is implemented by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health • Center for Communication Programs (JHU-CCP) in partnership with FHI 360 and Management Sciences for Health (MSH). Visit www.k4health.org for more info.