Data Revolution

AN INNOVATION OF THE SEQOTA DECLARATION, ETHIOPIA'S COMMITMENT TO END STUNTING

5 Woredas will be supplied with computers and a database (UNISE) capturing key indicators - pilot begins October 2019

900 Health posts will be connected to tablets and satellite internet (Yazmi) with 5 starting by December 2019

33 Woredas implementing resource tracking and partnership management

THE PROBLEM

In an era of increasingly tight fiscal resources and budgets, policymakers need objective and impartial means of reviewing programs for efficiency and effectiveness to inform decisions about modifying, scaling-up, or stopping publicly-funded programs.

The Seqota Declaration implementing sectors' data systems are of variable stages of maturity and strength. Consequently, the multisectoral data relevant for tracking nutrition outcomes are of limited availability and often are not used to inform decision making.

Policymakers are not always involved in the development of these data systems nor are these data systems sufficiently flexible to reflect the evolving needs, resulting in a failure to capture the data needed. In other cases, the timeliness and other quality issues mean that policymakers cannot rely on data to inform their decision-making processes.

THE SOLUTION

The goal of the Data Revolution innovation is to develop and implement a culture of data-driven decision-making by establishing a robust, multisectoral data management system to collect high quality data that will inform decision-making and intervention targeting, ultimately leading to a reduction in childhood stunting. The scope of the Data Revolution activities continues to change rapidly as new systems such as the Unified Nutrition Information System for Ethiopia (UNISE) platform, Yazmi's satellite data transmission systems, resource tracking and partnership management tools are introduced and piloted. The underlying aim of this innovative approach is to harness new technologies and methodologies to support data availability and use.

The primary activities under this innovation are:

- Build robust electronic data systems to capture routine administrative data from key Seqota Declaration implementing sectors.

- Develop lean supplementary reporting systems in select geographies to collect performance management indicators to track program implementation and to guide decisions around scaling.

- Design evaluation studies where needed to capture outcomes that otherwise would not be possible to track or require more robust levels of evidence to guide decision-making.

- Analyze monitoring and evaluation data to produce meaningful information that can be used for decision-making.

- Advocate for and build capacity of sectoral focal persons across levels to use data when designing and refining programs and interventions.

- Map Seqota Declaration implementing stakeholders to improve coordination and responsible, rational resource allocation.

- Track government and development partners' financial allocation and expenditure and use the data for informed decision-making and rational resource allocation.

KEY FEATURES OF THE DATA REVOLUTION

Innovations to improve data availability

UNISE

The Unified Nutrition Information System for Ethiopia (UNISE) is a monitoring tool for multisectoral nutrition coordination. It is designed to track multisectoral nutrition data from lower (kebele/tabia and woreda) to higher (zonal, regional, national) levels, and to show performance progress in a dashboard for use by decision-makers and implementers. This tool was developed by UNICEF with support and input from the Ethiopian government and key stakeholders.

YAZMI TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION

To improve data accessibility in areas where there is no access to electricity and poor internet connectivity, the Government of Ethiopia will launch solar-powered satellite-based Yazmi Technology solutions which will enable satellite-based data transfer using health posts as a hub and capacity building platform for development agents.

OUTCOMES MONITORING

To track the progress of the government and development partners' investments, outcomes monitoring will be conducted to assess the progress of selected priority indicators from the baseline study. This will be a combination of annual or biannual surveys to supplement regular reviews of growth monitoring data, representing a departure from the traditional and expensive large-scale household endline surveys.

ONLINE NUTRITION RESOURCE TRACKING AND PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

To support informed decision-making on financial resources, the Seqota PDU with funding support from Nutrition International has conducted financial allocation and expenditure tracking for the past two years in 33 woredas.

SUPPORT DATA USE

The PDU will mentor the soon-to-be-recruited Woreda Coordinators to support the analysis and use of data at the woreda and lower level while regularly meeting with federal ministers and sharing scorecards with narrative reports translating the data into clear, actionable recommendations.

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PROCESS LEARNINGS

In early 2019, a Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) technical partner was engaged with funding support from Big Win Philanthropy to assess the data needs of the Seqota PDUs and develop a MEL strategy. The MEL technical partner, IDinsight, adopted a two-pronged approach of being embedded within the PDU for a period of time to understand their data needs and conducting a light touch process evaluation of key Seqota Declaration innovations to develop a MEL strategy in collaboration with the PDU.

Overall, the process evaluation found that while existing sector data systems collect some level of routine monitoring data, implementing sectors and the PDU have jointly developed key performance indicators (KPIs) and started using them to routinely track and measure sector performance. Costed Woreda plans have also been developed, an important first step in comprehensively documenting nutrition activities in one place across sectors and driving sectoral coordination.

The process evaluation recommended that 1) the PDU would benefit from a more targeted strategy to close the funding gap for Seqota Declaration activities and drive knowledge and technology transfer; 2) the PDU and sectors need to strengthen data systems to facilitate data analysis and sharing among all relevant decision-makers in the Seqota Declaration landscape; and 3) additional guidance needs to be provided to sectors to incorporate baseline study results and KPIs into their plans and activities.

Seqota Declaration activities are wide ranging in terms of the sectors and geographies they cover, which makes MEL needs more complex than an average large-scale program. To this end, a comprehensive and cohesive MEL strategy was developed to describe the primary activities to be undertaken during the Innovation Phase with a framework that helped identify critical inputs to enable data-driven decision-making.
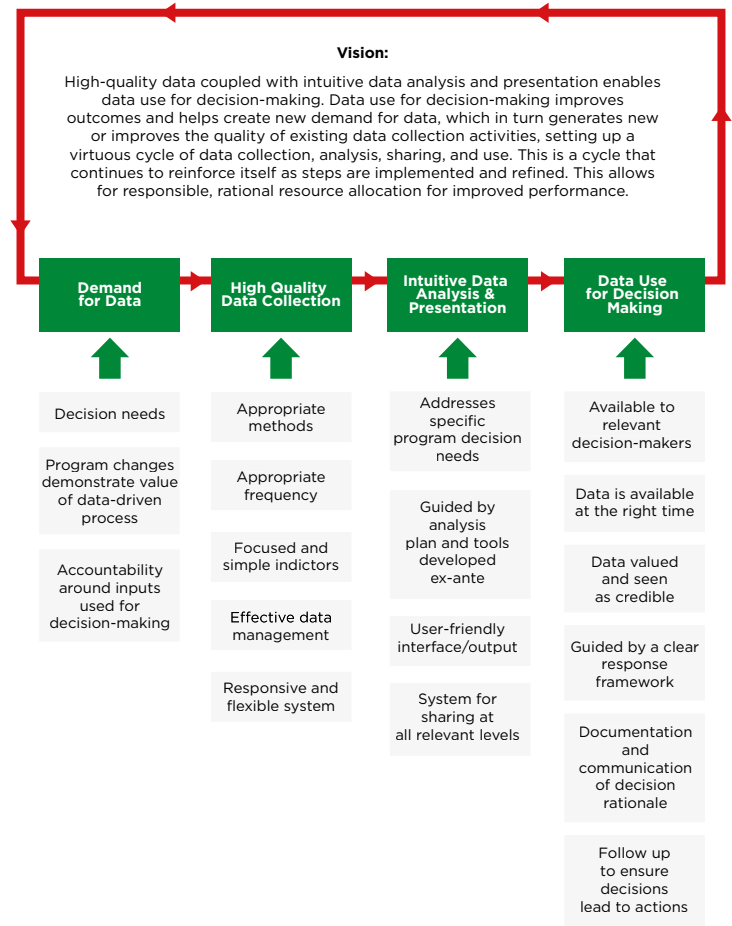
Online resource tracking and partnership management system launched in 33 Seqota Declaration Woredas

In support of the Seqota Declaration innovation phase, Nutrition International initiated a technical assistance (TA) consultancy to enhance sub-national capacity in nutrition resource allocation and tracking, partnership coordination and stakeholder management, accountability mechanisms, and advocacy in all 33 Seqota Declaration woredas.

Phase 1 of the TA consultancy delivered tools and guidelines on nutrition resource tracking, partnership management, stakeholder mapping, accountability, and advocacy. In addition, training curricula and materials were developed, training-of-trainers (TOT) was provided along with woreda level orientation to key officials and implementing partners using tools and guidelines translated into local languages. An online partnership management system has been developed and field tested. The TA team also completed a baseline assessment in 33 woredas to gather critical baseline information on existing systems and processes at the woreda level. A second in-depth assessment was carried out in 13 woredas to assess staff and woreda capacity needs to implement a resource tracking and partnership management system.

The baseline assessment findings identified the following areas for improvement: (i) nutrition resource allocation and tracking, (ii) allocation of resources by Seqota Declaration strategic objectives, (iii) partnership management and (iv) stakeholder mapping.

Data-Driven Decision-Making Cycle

Vision:

High-quality data coupled with intuitive data analysis and presentation enables data use for decision-making. Data use for decision-making improves outcomes and helps create new demand for data, which in turn generates new or improves the quality of existing data collection activities, setting up a virtuous cycle of data collection, analysis, sharing, and use. This is a cycle that continues to reinforce itself as steps are implemented and refined. This allows for responsible, rational resource allocation for improved performance.

Demand for Data	High Quality Data Collection	Intuitive Data Analysis & Presentation	Data Use for Decision Making
Decision needs	Appropriate methods	Addresses specific program decision needs	Available to relevant decision-makers
Program changes demonstrate value of data-driven process	Appropriate frequency	Guided by analysis plan and tools developed ex-ante	Data is available at the right time
Accountability around inputs used for decision-making	Focused and simple indictors	User-friendly interface/output	Data valued and seen as credible
	Effective data management	System for sharing at all relevant levels	Guided by a clear response framework
	Responsive and flexible system		Documentation and communication of decision rationale
			Follow up to ensure decisions lead to actions

Cross Cutting Inputs	
Clear roles and responsibilites at each stage	Appropriate capacity and skill sets
Adequate resources	Aligned incentives around data-driven decision making

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

UNICEF, Nutrition International and Big Win Philanthropy co-funded a baseline study in Seqota Declaration woredas. UNICEF has supported modifications to UNISE to include key Seqota Declaration indicators and the new inter-ministerial priorities, training programs for the five pilot woredas and the provision of computers in these woredas to address challenges faced in the original pilot.

The Ministry of Health and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have committed to funding the roll-out of Yazmi Technology solutions to 900 woredas, covering all Seqota Declaration health posts with solar-powered satellite internet infrastructure and tablets that can interface with existing and new databases for collecting data to feed into the scorecards for the inter-ministerial priorities and other evolving data needs.