



African Population and
Health Research Center



Meeting Report for Countdown to 2030: Countries Virtual Meeting 2020

November 17, 2020

Executive Summary

On November 17, 2020, Countdown to 2030 (CD2030) and the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) organized a country annual meeting to introduce team members and provide background on Countdown to 2030. The objectives of the meeting were: to provide a common overall scope of the country collaborations; to present the Data & Analysis Centers (DACs) overall objectives, plans and potential resources and lay the foundation for future meetings and interactions. This was a virtual meeting, organized in partnership with Johns Hopkins University and the US Fund for UNICEF. It was attended by a total of 121 participants, with 113 participants from the 15 CD2030 country collaboration teams. Participants also included country representatives from the Global Financing Facility (GFF) and team members from the Gates Ventures Exemplars in Global Health project.

The meeting kicked off with a background presentation on CD2030 delivered by the CD2030 Director and was followed by an overview of the CD2030 and GFF partnership. Participants from the different 15 CD2030 countries gave a brief introduction of their team members and their scope of work. This was followed by presentations from the six CD2030 DACs on their supporting role and resources available to advance the partnership. The meeting concluded with a series of questions and a summary of next steps.

The first CD2030 Countries Virtual Meeting created momentum for enhanced collaboration and advanced the efforts to strengthen capacity and monitor progress in RMNCH.

Background

Countdown to 2030 started in 2003 as a multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional collaboration, in response to the challenge of the health-related Millennium Development Goals by 2015. At the time, it was known as Countdown to 2015. Countdown is a collaboration of academics from global, regional, country institutions, UN agencies and World Bank and civil society organizations, to track progress of life-saving interventions for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Nutrition (RMNCAH+N). Countdown generates evidence to foster advocacy and accountability for women's, children's and adolescents' health. It analyzes data on coverage of health interventions across socioeconomic status, gender, education, and geography; and on key drivers of change such as policy, finance, and other health system dimensions. In 2016, the Countdown to 2030 Initiative adapted its strategies and approaches to align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and particularly the Global Strategy for Women's Children's and Adolescents' Health 2016-2030.

Countdown focuses on strengthening country evidence and analytical capacity through working with country analysts from public health institutions, research institutions and ministries of health. For example, the Countdown conducted 15 data analysis workshops for teams of analysts from 50 countries in Africa, Caribbean & Latin America during 2017-2019. In 2020, the Countdown expanded its work in countries, focusing on initially 15 countries that have investment cases for women's, children's and adolescents' health through the Global Financing Facility (GFF).

The Countdown work in countries aims to generate evidence and strengthen country's analytical capacity in relation to the measurement of progress and performance of RMNCAH+N programs. The focus is on analytical work to inform annual and mid-term reviews of the countries' 5-year plans and GFF investment cases.

Country Collaborations involve Countdown academic global/regional institution(s) and country academic/public health institution, working in close collaboration with Ministry of Health and GFF, as well as statistical offices and UN partners.

Introductory remarks by organizing partners

- The African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), the CD2030 regional lead, has been providing technical and administrative support to help countries build evidence for improving

RMNCAH. – *(Cheikh Faye, head of West Africa Regional Office, APHRC)*

- CD2030 shifted focus from global activities to regional and country activities, supporting MoH in 13 African countries and 2 Asian Countries to strengthen their capacities for monitoring progress in RMNCAH. The country focus is in enhancing country led results monitoring in GFF supported countries. The country teams are led by a public health institution, CD2030 global and regional partners, MoH, GFF World Bank, WHO, and UNICEF. The products are creation of analytical codes and in-depth studies of progress and performance to assess and inform midterm and annual reviews of countries five year plans, conducting technical workshops, strengthening analytical capacity, producing scientific articles and supporting M&E frameworks. In 2021 another seven countries will join the collaboration. There are challenges to overcome such as analytical capacity gaps, suboptimal quality of analytical work done in a rush and limited use of academic outputs. The solutions are to have country-level quality analyses of progress and performance, strengthened analytical capacity of public health institution and MoH and greater data use in countries. – *(Ties Boerma, University of Manitoba, CD2030 director)*
- The GFF is bringing analytical expertise together conducting subnational data analysis and translating data into decision-making. Through collaborating with the CD2030 network and working together with the MoH, the annual reports, midterm (in-depth) reports and subnational reports are produced regularly. They are used by the subnational authorities and feed into the GFF investment cases and to the country platform to advance data-driven policy development, Finance allocation and program improvement. – **(Kimberly Boer, Global Financing Facility)**

Data & Analysis Centers

Countdown has established six Data & Analysis Centers (DAC) which will support the GFF countries with tools and methods for data analysis and are also contributing to global synthesis of country evidence. DACs will maintain a repository of country data and contribute to monitoring and measuring the progress and performance of RMNCAH+N from a global and regional perspective. [The six DACs presented an overview during the meeting.](#)

- **Health Policy and Systems Drivers**
Health systems drivers are key to understanding the enabling factors, social dynamics and rights that underpin coverage and equity of women's, children's, and adolescents' health. The key activities are to understand the health policy and systems research context, work with country partners to draw from the WHO RMNCH policy database and lastly work with existing tools to develop program policy indicators/timelines, health systems tracer indicators and develop program implementation toolkit. - **(Asha George, University of the Western Cape)**
- **Equity Data Analysis Centers**
The equity profiles aim is to use data to achieve progress on health equity analysis. Its outputs provide evidence on who is being left behind, in order to inform health policies, programs and practices that aim at closing existing gaps. The available resources are the equity dashboards and the equity country profiles. The available tools are the use of equiplot, stratifiers, slope index of inequality and concentration index. - **(Aluisio Barros, Pelotas University)**
- **Health Financing Data and Analysis Center**
The Health Financing Data and Analysis Center (DAC) monitors global aid flows for RMNCH to support tracking of financing for health and RMNCH within countries to ensure efficient and equitable allocation of funds sub nationally. The Health financing DAC has some datasets and resources such as Muskoka2 Excel tool, Countdown country profiles, Uganda Financing Report, Global aid for reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, data and analysis from application of the Muskoka2 method, 2002-2017, WHO Global Health Expenditures Database and The Aid Data. - **(Jo Borghi, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM))**
- **Geospatial Analysis**

The Geospatial Analysis DAC focuses on geospatial data integration to improve the spatial demographic and health evidence base in LMICs. Their activities include increasing awareness of geospatial methods and datasets among countries and partners, supporting Countdown country partnerships with geospatial analyses and research and developing new geospatial methods, insights and datasets. - **(Andy Tatum, WorldPop, University of Southampton)**

- **Effective coverage**

The DAC for effective coverage develops analytical tools to permit the estimation and analysis of *quality-adjusted* coverage of RMNCH-N interventions in LMICs. Countdown to 2030 developed a *cascade of coverage* that shows the loss of coverage due to lack of quality of care and defined measures of quality-adjusted coverage. The tools available are Cascade tools and use of health facility surveys data and households survey tools for assessing service readiness and quality of care.

- **(Agbessi Amouzou, Johns Hopkins University)**

- **Monitoring health facility/system data**

Monitoring the progress and performance of health services is a critical part of annual reviews of national plans and investment cases. The key activities are to focus on subnational statistics, analysis of subnational performance, advancing methods for facility data analysis, act as a link for sharing the experiences with health facility data analyses for district monitoring between countries and work with other DACs to improve analyses. - **(Cheikh Faye, APHRC)**

Countdown's Communication and Policy Engagement Team

- There will be support for the country activities for example on advocacy materials i.e. training workshop, policy briefs, report summaries, communication materials i.e. presentations, graphic designs and dissemination of country level findings. On the global activities the redesign the CD2030 website is in progress, there will be a series of video tutorials/trainings on effective communication and the CD2030 Social media platform is live. - **(Emma Williams, Johns Hopkins University)**

Next steps

- The DACs will be available for specific analysis/resources support that the countries may need
- The future plans of the DACs are to have specific sessions amongst countries within the DAC areas and use advanced tools to measure the RMNCH within their countries. Scheduled sessions can be accessed [here](#).
- The main aim of CD2030 is focusing on the RMNCH-N issues. The purpose of this meeting was to share how the CD2030 country partners are supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the GFF so as to strengthen countries' analytical capacities in MoH. In Year 2 CD2030 will move into more depth and know what advances/analysis can be ventured into to inform the reviews. - **(Ties Boerma, CD2030)**

Meeting Materials

- [Agenda](#)
- [Participants List](#)
- Slide Deck:
 - [English](#)
 - [French](#)
- Pamphlet:
 - [English](#)
 - [French](#)