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MOBILIZING MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS AS RH/FP “CHAMPIONS”

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Equity in Health: Ensuring Access, Increasing Use

www.esdproj.org

Rationale

“There are many communities without schools, health facilities or sanitation, but there is hardly any community without a place of worship.”



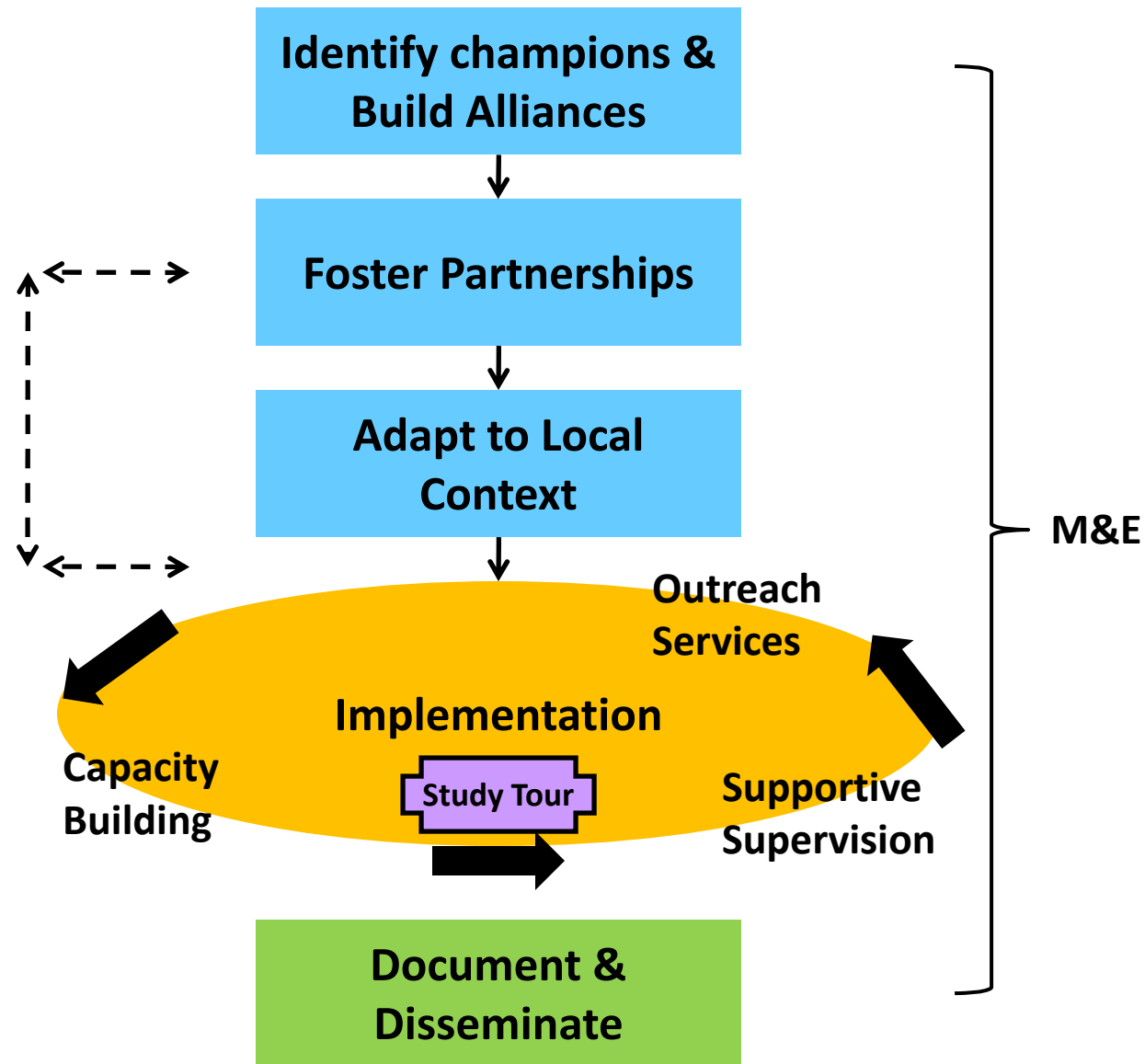
- Carol Bellamy (former Executive Director, UNICEF)

ESD's Approach

Build capacity of Religious Leaders (RLs) to act as change agents to shift community attitudes/behaviors



ESD MODEL: Engaging Religious Leaders as Champions of RH/FP



Results - Yemen

- ❑ RLs - main source of info on FP and breast feeding
- ❑ RLs expanded 2 religious education centers to provide RH/maternal services
- ❑ RLs issued & distributed 4 educational brochures
- ❑ Ministry of Religious Affairs issued edict asking RLs to disseminate messages



Results- Nigeria

- ❑ 35 RLs in Kano state trained over 1,000 RLs across state
- ❑ Over 500,000 people reached across state
- ❑ 60,000 + young women/families reached at household level
- ❑ Instrumental in getting community members to donate blood



Results- Pakistan



- 6 religious sects approved RL training
- Paradigm shift in FP from limiting to spacing births
- Concept of healthy timing & spacing of pregnancies and role of RLs included in draft national population policy

Lessons Learned (pearls of wisdom)

- ❑ RLs are untapped development actors
- ❑ Include RLs from all sects
- ❑ Use culturally appropriate terminologies for FP
- ❑ Strengthen linkages between RLs & health providers/NGOs
- ❑ Incorporate country-specific *fatwas* supportive of RH/FP



THANK YOU!



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