The Last Mile Toolkit

With the goal in sight and the imminent dissolution of the partnership just around the corner, several important exercises will enable a smooth transition and increase the likelihood of program sustainability once the partnership leaves it in the hands of local stakeholders.

THE LAST MILE: The Main Menu

Element	*Tools*
Adapting the approach to sustain momentum	Refocusing the approach to surveillance
	Involving local stakeholders
	Adapting and continuously improving the intervention strategy
Transferring control and giving credit	Transferring control checklist
	Worksheet for sharing credit
Capturing and communicating lessons learned	Partnership self-evaluation
	Identifying and communicating lessons learned
Dissolving the partnership	Discussion guide for partnership dissolution

REFOCUSING THE APPROACH TO SURVEILLANCE

In partnerships focused on intervention, a change in approach to surveillance is often needed in the Last Mile as the number of cases declines. While increasing capabilities to conduct surveillance earlier in a partnership typically lead to detection of a greater number of cases, the number of cases detected drops as a partnership nears its goal. At this point the partners must look harder for cases and use new tools to identify those cases and sort out the false positives they will encounter. With the smallpox eradication project, for example, the team shifted their surveillance strategy as the number of cases reported fell. They set up a reward system to encourage health workers to work harder to find cases. This worksheet may be helpful to partners in the Last Mile, as they consider whether changes are needed in their approach to surveillance.

Questions

How do we need to change our methods of case finding, reporting, and analysis to keep up with the changes that have occurred?

What new tools and resources are needed?

What can we do to assure that surveillance continues even after active control measures have ended?

How can we draw the appropriate lessons from our experience?

INVOLVING LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

Another way successful teams adapt to the needs of the Last Mile is to place greater emphasis on involving local stakeholders as the intervention spreads to additional communities. For example, it may be important to tie the partnership's program into the existing health system to ensure long-term sustainability and/or to rely on key local stakeholders to continue the program efforts after the partnership has left. To the extent that tasks change in the Last Mile (at a time when funding is running out), new partners and other resources from inside a country as well as outside may also be needed.

Questions

What new challenges do we face in completing our project?

Which local stakeholders could help us address those challenges?

How can we gain their support and commitment to reach the end goal of the partnership?

How can we tie our program into the other components of the health system, thereby strengthening the local health system?

ADAPTING AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING INTERVENTION STRATEGY

Successful partnerships are continuously improving their strategy based on their experience to date. They are also alert to changes in the environment that may have strategic implications in the Last Mile. As more people receive treatment, for example, fewer cases appear in the population, and this change in the environment typically requires a change in strategy. The questions below may be helpful to teams in the Last Mile as they consider the need to adapt their strategy.

Questions

What lessons have we learned from our experience to date (and from the experience of others) that might help to improve our effort?

What new challenges are keeping us from accomplishing our goal?

How can we adapt our strategy to address those lessons and challenges?

What additional resources are required?

How will we measure our progress in the Last Mile?

TRANSFERRING CONTROL CHECKLIST

Successful partnerships must plan how they will transfer control of the project to regional and local leaders as soon as the team senses the Last Mile has begun. Given any changes in strategy that have been identified and additional stakeholders needed to support the changes, the team should clarify the roles that will have to be filled and who should fill them. The team must also find ways to gain their support, encourage ownership, identify constraints (financial, human resources, technological, and so on), and work with them to address the challenges ahead.

Role to be filled	*Local stakeholder most appropriate for the role*	*Ways to encourage the stakeholder to take on responsibility*

WORKSHEET FOR SHARING CREDIT

In an earlier part of the toolkit we provided a tool for sharing credit. This is particularly important as a project nears its end to ensure efforts will continue once the partnership is dissolved. It also creates support for future partnerships: by helping local stakeholders to celebrate the program's success locally, you increase the likelihood countries and communities will sustain the program and invest in future partnerships out of a sense of pride and ownership.

In addition, it is important for the partners to discuss what kind of recognition is needed by each of their organizations. Such recognition helps lay a foundation of trust and respect that encourages collaboration in future projects partners may have with each other. As several global health leaders have observed, "credit should be infinitely divisible." This worksheet can serve as a guide for partner discussion and a tool for planning.

Stakeholder/ partnering organization	*Recognition needs*	*Opportunities for giving credit*	*Specific activities to give credit*

1. *Stakeholder/partnering organization.* In this column partners should list the sponsoring organizations for the project and other key stakeholders.
2. *Recognition needs.* Each partner should speak candidly about how much and what kind of credit its organization will need to continue its support for the partnership. This could take the form of local media attention of success visible to a governing body. Partners should also discuss the needs of other stakeholders.

3. *Opportunities for giving credit.* This column can be used by the partners to identify outlets and opportunities to provide that credit.
4. *Specific activities to give credit.* Partners can brainstorm specific activities that will provide each partnering organization or other stakeholder with the appropriate form of credit. (More than one activity can apply to the same opportunity in the previous column.)

PARTNERSHIP SELF-EVALUATION

Before the dissolution of the partnership, it is important to evaluate how the partnership did in terms of reaching the goal and working as a team. This tool can serve as a guide for the discussion.

	Element	*The degree to which the partnership succeeded*	*Major challenges*	*Lessons learned*
First Mile checkup	Goal			
	Membership			
	Structure of partnership			
	Strategy of partnership			

	Element	*The degree to which the partnership succeeded*	*Major challenges*	*Lessons learned*
Management checkup	Research and planning			
	Launching, measuring, and communicating			
	Problem solving			
	Revising operating plan			
Leadership checkup	*Team leadership roles*			
	Convener			
	Visionary			
	Strategist			
	Team builder			
	External leadership roles			
	Advocate			
	Political influencer			
	Networker			

IDENTIFYING AND COMMUNICATING LESSONS LEARNED

Based on the results of the "Partnership Self-Evaluation," teams can use the tool below to identify and communicate lessons learned, both from successes and failures. It's particularly important to debrief failures so the team itself can learn from each mistake and can warn others before they make the same mistake. When debriefing failures, in particular, it is important to follow four steps:

1. Admit to making the mistake.
2. Learn from the mistake.
3. Warn others before they make the same mistake.
4. Get over the mistake and move on.

This worksheet provides a way to debrief projects and avoid future mistakes based on what did or did not work.

Aspect	*Notes*
Project to be debriefed	
Goals/objectives of project	
Team members and their roles	
Project time period	
Date and time of debriefing	

Aspect	*Notes*
What went well?	
What did not go well?	
Did we meet our goals? Why or why not?	
What did we learn from our successes?	
What did we learn from our failures?	
What would we do differently?	
What message would be valuable to spread to others so they could avoid our mistakes?	
What forum (for example, speech or workshop) or form of publication would be appropriate for communicating these lessons (Web or print)?	
Which partner(s) should be responsible for communicating these lessons?	

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PARTNERSHIP DISSOLUTION

When reaching the Last Mile, it is important for partners to think carefully about how to dissolve the partnership. Use the following questions to guide this conversation.

Questions

Has the partnership reached its goal?

What impact has the partnership had in the field of global health?

What, if any, value would be added if the partnership continued?

What loose ends (final communications, final credit giving, dissemination of lessons learned) need to be tied up?

What actions and what target date are appropriate to dissolve the partnership?