

# COMCAHPSS

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*South-South capacity building and networking partnership for leadership, research and practice to support health policy, systems strengthening for improved Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (MNCAH) outcomes improvement in the ECOWAS sub-region and Cameroon*



## Partners and Funder



**IDRC | CRDI**

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## INTRODUCTION

Health systems are the common-pool resource on which all programs in the health sector including Maternal, Newborn, Adolescent and Child Health (MNCAH) programs draw. Across sub-Saharan Africa, health systems continue to face multiple, complex and urgent challenges in ensuring that service delivery is efficient, effective and equitable. This weakness affects the ability to implement and scale up effective interventions to improve MNCAH outcomes.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this initiative is to conduct multi-level capacity strengthening and networking at individual-, institutional- and country-level in West and Central Africa for leadership in Health Policy and Systems (HPS) and Maternal Newborn Child and Adolescent health (MNCAH) research and practice. This is to support context-relevant and effective policy and program decision-making and implementation for MNCAH improvements in West and Central Africa, and to monitor and evaluate the processes and impact of the program and its lessons.

Specific objectives are to:

1. Strengthen **health leadership capacity** for research, innovation and change for decision-making and implementation of high quality, effective, efficient and equitable MNCAH programs and services which improve health outcomes in West and Central Africa.
2. Strengthen **HPS and MNCAH research capacities** in West and Central Africa in order to generate evidence to support context-relevant and effective policy and program decision-making and implementation of quality, effective and efficient MNCAH services and outcomes in West and Central Africa.
3. Strengthen researcher ability to work with decision-makers and implementers to identify relevant research agendas, and to generate, package and disseminate research information to support **policy development and implementation** in West and Central Africa.
4. Support and develop multi-disciplinary **multi-level leadership and research networks** for HPS and MNCAH in West and Central Africa.
5. Collaborate with the West African Health Organisation (WAHO) at the contextual level to promote the use of evidence for MNCAH programs and HPS strengthening for improved outcomes in West and Central Africa.
6. Monitor and evaluate the processes and impact of the program and lessons for MNCAH improvements.

## METHODOLOGY

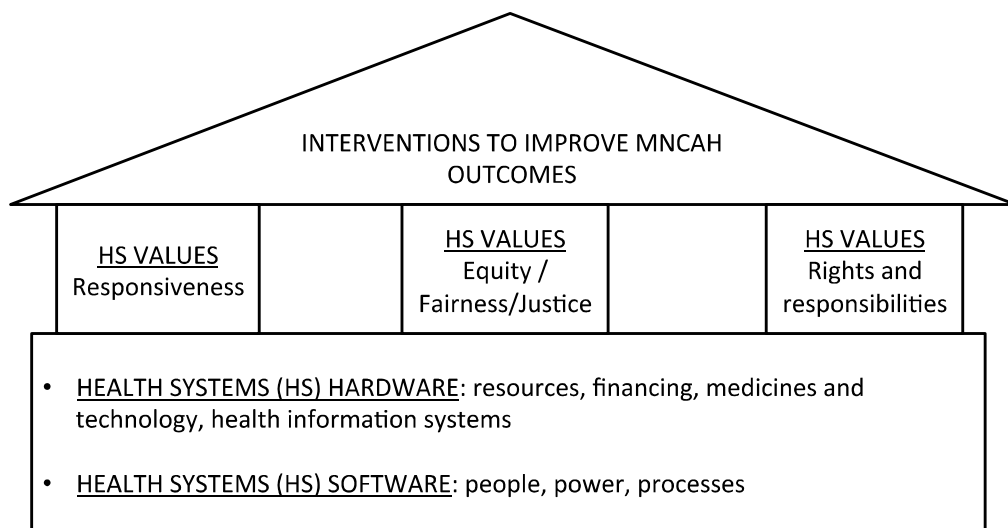
The methodology involves the development and implementation of three linked clusters of interventions related to (i) leadership, research and practice capacity strengthening; (ii) networking; and (iii) collaboration with WAHO in its role in the Innovating for Maternal and Child Health in Africa (IMCHA) program as a Health Policy Research Organization (HPRO) for evidence-informed policy advocacy to support MNCAH improvements. A realist evaluation research design will be used to evaluate the processes (how and why the interventions are implemented) and their impact on HPS and

MNCAH in the West African sub-region. This initiative is founded on South-South collaboration, partnership and networking.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The conceptual framework guiding the design and implementation of the proposed interventions theorises that health systems are the foundation on which interventions to improve MNCAH rest. MNCAH programs designed and implemented without attention to a strong health systems foundation may produce results in the short term but sustainability will be a problem and the programs will lack resilience: the resilience of MNCAH programs is bound to the resilience of the health system in which they operate. Health system ‘hardware’ are the resources (human as well as infrastructure, equipment, tools and supplies), financing arrangements, health information systems, medicines and technology. Also key in the determinants of the resilience of health systems are people within health systems, their power and how they choose to exercise it, and the processes they set up and operate to run the health system. The values (both implicit and explicit) on which health systems are built – issues of responsiveness, equity, fairness or justice, rights and responsibilities – are key pillars that also determine the strength of health systems. These foundations and pillars support any interventions that are put in place in a health system to service the population and influence the outcome of these interventions. This includes interventions to improve the health of mothers, newborns, infants, children and adolescents. This is illustrated diagrammatically in the figure below:

## Health Systems Hardware, software and values as supporting “infrastructure” of interventions



The interventions of the project target three levels of capacity strengthening: individual, institutional and contextual in order to support and enable strong and resilient interventions that improve MNCAH outcomes. These interventions have the specific intention of building and supporting: (a) research and practice leadership; (b) networking; and (c) advocacy within and between West African health systems to catalyse innovation for health systems development to support effective and sustainable scale-up of MNCAH interventions. These interventions are summarised in the table below:

	<b>Individual &amp; institutional level</b>		<b>Contextual level</b>
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Capacity building (Objectives 1 – 3)</b>	<b>Networking (Objective 4)</b>	<b>Collaboration with WAHO as an HPRO  (Objective 5)</b>
<b>Leadership (Objective 1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West African bi-annual seminars: Leadership modules</li> <li>leadership mentorship program</li> <li>Support to Pan African DrPH program development and implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West African emerging HPS research and practice network (WANEL)</li> <li>Communities of practice</li> <li>Global conference e.g. HSG participation support grants for emerging leaders with accepted abstracts</li> <li>Annual partnership meetings</li> </ul>	Promotion of the use of evidence for decision making Strengthened collaboration between researchers and decision makers
<b>Research (Objective 2)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West African bi-annual seminars: HPS and MNCAH research modules</li> <li>HPS and MNCAH research projects</li> <li>Research supervisor/mentor program</li> <li>Specialist Master’s program</li> <li>Peer-reviewed journal publication support</li> </ul>		
<b>Practice (Objective 3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West African bi-annual seminars: Researchers “how to” work with decision makers and implementers modules</li> <li>Research communication interventions</li> <li>Researcher, media and civil society engagement program</li> </ul>		
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative process documentation</li> <li>Quantitative output and impact documentation</li> <li>Realist evaluation of the program (‘how’ and ‘why’ the program works to produce</li> </ul>		

	Individual & institutional level		Contextual level
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Capacity building (Objectives 1 – 3)</b>	<b>Networking (Objective 4)</b>	<b>Collaboration with WAHO as an HPRO  (Objective 5)</b>
<b>(Objective 6)</b>	the documented impacts)		

## **PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

The partner organisations of the initiative include:

- Benin (Francophone)
  - Center for Research in Human Reproduction and Demography (CERRHUD)
- Burkina Faso (Francophone)
  - WAHO
  - West Africa Health Research Network (WAHRNET)
  - Institut Supérieur des Sciences de la Population (ISSP)
- Cameroun (Bilingual Anglophone/Francophone)
  - Biotechnology Centre
  - The Centre for the Development of Best Practices in Health (CDBPH)
  - Higher Institute for Growth in HEalth Research for Women ( HIGHER Women)
- Cote d'Ivoire (Francophone)
  - Université Houphouet Boigny /Ivorian Public Health Association
- Ghana (Anglophone)
  - University of Ghana (UG)
  - Ghana Health Service Research and Development Division (GHS RDD)
  - Ghana institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA)
  - ABANTU for Development
  - African Media and Malaria Research Network (AMMREM)
- Mali (Francophone)
  - L'Institut National de Recherche en Santé Publique (INRSP)
- Niger (Francophone)
  - Laboratoire d'Etudes et de Recherche sur les Dynamiques Sociales et le Développement Local (LASDEL)
- Nigeria (Anglophone)
  - College of Medicine University of Nigeria Enugu Campus (COMUNEC)
  - National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA)
  - Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFON)
- Senegal (Francophone)
  - Institut de Santé et Développement (ISED)