Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (AHPSR) established in 1999 – with the goal: to promote the generation, dissemination and use of knowledge for enhancing health systems performance through catalytic action

- We know what works but we have not been successful at ensuring that those interventions are effectively integrated into systems and scaled up

- Recognition that research – particularly policy and systems research, is needed to achieve health goals
The Challenge of Implementation

- Pregnant women tested HIV+: 14,815
- Those checked for CD4: 2,528
- Those with results available: 1,680
- Those found eligible for cART: 796
- Those initiated on cART: 581

82.9% drop out
35.5% drop out
27.0% drop out
Strategic Objectives:

- Provide a forum for learning and exchange for HPSR community
- Support institutional capacity for conduct and uptake of health policy and systems research.
- Stimulate the generation of knowledge and innovations to nurture learning and resilience in health systems.
- Increase the demand for use of knowledge for strengthening health systems
Contributions of the Alliance HPSR

- Stimulating greater interest, appreciation, and recognition for HPSR and its role in health systems strengthening:
  - Organization of global symposia (Montreux 2010, Beijing 2012, Cape Town 2014 and Vancouver 2016)
  - Release of WHO Strategy on HPSR (2012) & the development of a Plan of Action for the implementation of this strategy – developed by the Alliance
  - Contributions to the World Health Report 2013 and acknowledgement of HPSR in achieving goal of Universal Health Coverage
  - Supported the establishment of Health Systems Global, a professional society of HPS researchers
Contributions of the Alliance HPSR

- Helped to build the HPSR through innovations in thinking:
  - Sounds Choices (2007)
  - Systems Thinking (2009)
  - HPSR Methodology Reader (2012)
  - Participatory Action Research Methodology Reader (2014)
  - Report on Participatory Leadership (2016)
  - HPSR Synthesis Methodology Reader (2017)
Reflections & Learnings
Conventional thinking to Research Impact

Assumption that outcomes and impact can be predicted based on inputs and outputs
What happens in reality

- Inputs
  - Research Funding
  - Priority Setting
  - Capacity Development

- Outputs
  - Publications

- Outcomes

- Impact
  - system readiness
  - opportunity for change
  - Policy/Practice Change
  - context
  - competing Interests
  - political will/motivation
  - Evidence & other Knowledge
(False?) Assumptions

- Assumption that implementation failure or a lack of policy decisions reflecting scientific evidence results from a 'know-do-gap'
(False?) Assumptions

- Assumption that implementation failure or a lack of policy decisions reflecting scientific evidence results from a 'know-do-gap'

- Assumption that decision-making is rational process

- Assumption that there are single solutions to complex problems
Systems Thinking
Systems Strengthening
Systems Thinking

- Emphasis on inter-linkages and relationship between internal and external factors (including structures, processes, and people) in a system.

"I'm sure glad the hole isn't in our end..."
"Systems Thinking' for road traffic injuries & fatalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Vector</th>
<th>Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Event</strong></td>
<td>Driver education, avoiding alcohol</td>
<td>Use of visibility enhancement materials</td>
<td>Clear road signs, street lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Event</strong></td>
<td>Safety helmets</td>
<td>Placement of equipment (baskets)</td>
<td>Separation of traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Event</strong></td>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
<td>First aid equipment</td>
<td>Availability of EMS</td>
</tr>
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Sustaining health impact through systems thinking
Moving Forward
Shifting our thinking

- Separation of 'knowing' and 'doing' a false dichotomy
Shifting our thinking

- Separation of 'knowing' and 'doing' a false dichotomy

- Evidence-based to evidence-informed
Shifting our thinking

- Separation of 'knowing' and 'doing' a false dichotomy

- Evidence-based to evidence-informed

- Recommendations to options

  “Policies for health are social choices, and the ways in which they are formulated and implemented matter very much in determining … either a virtuous or a vicious cycle between [a society’s] level of development and the workings of its health system.”
Shifting our thinking

- Separation of 'knowing' and 'doing' a false dichotomy
- Evidence-based to evidence-informed
- Recommendations to options
- Translational research to transformative research
Shifting our thinking

- Separation of *knowing* and *doing* a false dichotomy
- Evidence-based to evidence-informed
- Recommendations to options
- *Translational* research to *transformative* research

- Towards a learning health system that continually responds to changing contexts
Learnings and Reflections

- Science: Insights poorly managed
- Evidence: Evidence poorly used
- Care: Experience poorly captured
- Communities
- Clinicians
- Patients
- Patient Experience

Missed Opportunities, Waste, and Harm

IOM, 2012
Embedded Research

- **National Level:**
  - Exploring the use and impact of parastatal or otherwise linked research institutions within government bodies
  - Exploring the role of dedicated platforms for research priority setting and as a mechanism for funding HPSR

- **Programme Level:**
  - Decision-maker led research to improve programme implementation

- **District level:**
  - Strengthening the use of routine data in planning and monitoring of activities and to identify research needs
Local investment and ownership by policy and implementing agencies

- Increasing domestic funding for research
  - Utility of research findings not dependent upon the size of research grants – Alliance experience with grants ranging from 15K – 500K has shown that even small investments can contribute to significant improvements

- Integrating funding for research into programme activities
  - Research and Programme funding often separated so left hand doesn't always know what the right hand is doing.
  - Needs for evidence and knowledge are real time and systems need to be responsive

- Outcomes of research is to inform policy and other decision-making
  - participatory leadership for HPSR - ownership/responsibility for HPSR should be shared by researchers and policy makers

- "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit"
Thank You

Trann@who.int