



Results Report June 2010

Building momentum and saving lives



Better information.
Better decisions.
Better health.



HMN is creating a clear path for health systems strengthening

Health information systems (HIS) are increasingly recognized as the central nervous system of the health sector. Information use in decision making is essential to improve health system performance, accountability and health outcomes. To guide countries in developing and strengthening their HIS, HMN has developed the standard reference for health information systems development – the HMN Framework.

The global impact of the HMN Framework is clear: there is increasing momentum to develop national health information systems; there is more investment in building and running these systems; the health information systems are producing better quality information, saving money and, most importantly, information is being used to achieve better health.

This brief report demonstrates the widespread application of the Framework and the growing body of evidence that better health information improves health outcomes and contributes to saving lives.

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Better information, better decisions, better health

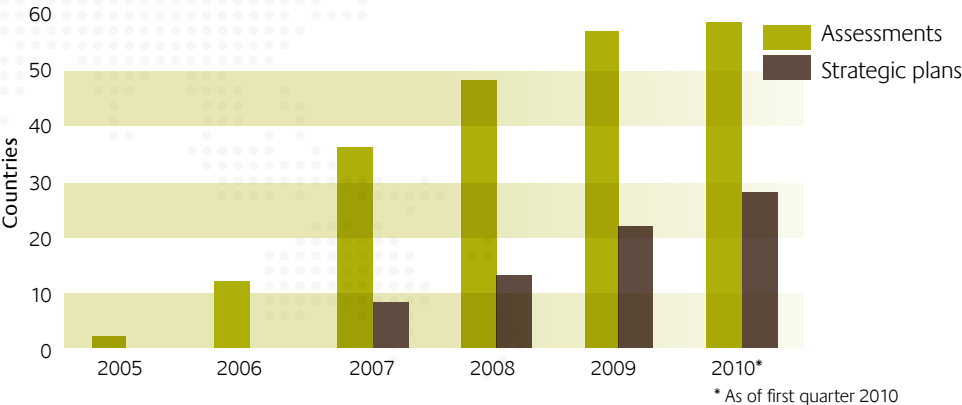
More momentum for health information systems



As of June 2010, **83 countries** are applying the principles and approaches of the **HMN Framework** to strengthen their national HIS and to improve their health status by using better health information. Countries are using the **HMN tools to assess their HIS**, to prepare costed **strategic plans** and to guide the **HIS strengthening** process.

Increasing country focus on HIS strengthening

Cumulative number of countries with HIS assessments and strategic plans, 2005-10¹



Overall, **69% of low and lower-middle income countries**² are following processes compatible with the HMN Framework to **strengthen their HIS**. The majority are working with HMN tools and approaches. Some countries — mostly those that started the HIS reform process before the HMN Framework was published — have assessed and strengthened their HIS using approaches and principles that are closely aligned to those of the HMN Framework.

¹ HMN, 2010
² <http://www.worldbank.org/> – accessed April 12 2010.



A global focus on HIS strengthening

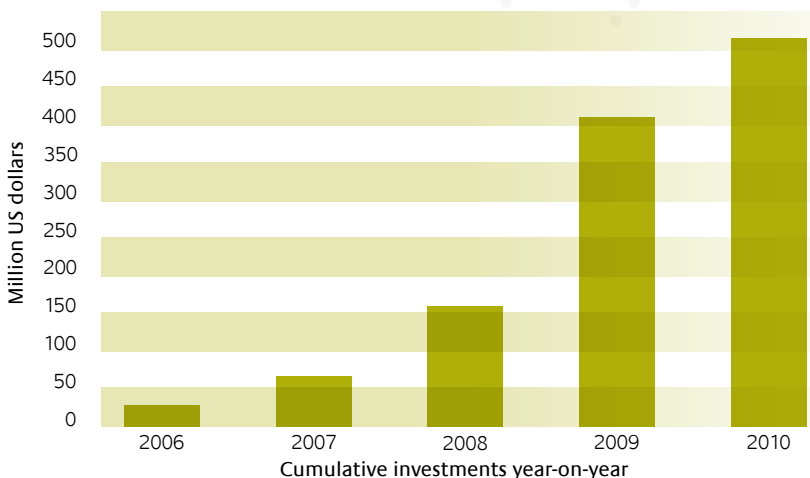
HMN and its network partners have steered the critical issue of health information system reform onto the global and national development agendas. The importance of better information use for evidence-based decision making was chosen as an **overarching theme for global attention** at recent high-level international meetings and conferences. These include the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Public Health Information Network meeting in Atlanta, USA, in 2009; the Global Health Information Forum in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2010; and the Global Health Council meeting in Washington D.C., USA, in June 2010. In addition, HMN co-funded a first-ever World Bank meeting to focus on **strengthening civil registration** in Washington, DC, USA, in 2009.

More investment in country information systems

Increasing global investment in HIS

At country level, the increasing emphasis on producing better quality information for decision making is demonstrated by increasing investment in country information systems: investments from national domestic resources as well as through donor support. By 2010, HMN tracked a cumulative **total of US\$ 514 million³** from a limited number of domestic and donor sources that was **invested in HIS strengthening globally**. Although these estimates show an upward trend in investment, further resources are needed to meet the increasing demand from countries for HIS investment.

Cumulative tracked investments in national HIS, 2006–10³



³ HMN, 2010



Increasing country investment in HIS

In addition to mobilizing more than US\$ 27 million in donor funds to support the roll-out of the national Health Management Information System (HMIS), **Ethiopia** has committed considerable domestic resources to support its **expansion and ongoing operation**. This includes the mobilization, training and deployment of over 1100 health information technicians to run the HMIS.

In **Sierra Leone**, HMN made a catalytic investment to re-establish and develop the nationwide District Health Information System (DHIS) that had completely collapsed during the decade-long civil war that ended in 2002. The reinvigorated HIS is now generating better quality information with national coverage at the district level. This information is being used for policy making, planning and management of health services at all levels. As a result of this success, Sierra Leone has **attracted new donor investments** from the World Bank, the Global Fund and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID) to **sustain and expand the development of the DHIS**.

Producing better quality health information

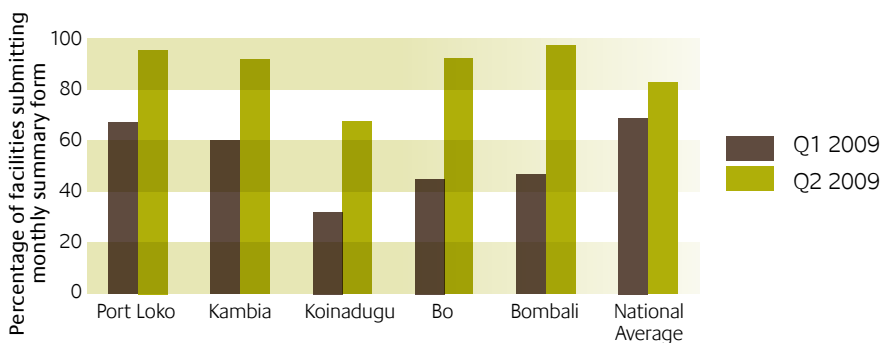
The improvement of data and information quality – including the coverage, timeliness, completeness and accuracy of data – is essential in the critical path for HIS strengthening.

In **Sierra Leone**, “league tables” are used to document and strategically communicate the completeness of HIS reporting by districts. The country has dramatically increased the proportion of districts meeting minimum criteria for **data completeness**. For example, in one quarter in 2009, the overall completeness rose from below 70% to above 80% for the country as a whole.

“Using health information is the best way to improve our performance.”

– Dr Samuel Smith, District Medical Officer for Western Area District, Sierra Leone

HIS reporting completeness, Sierra Leone, 2009 ⁴



Cambodia addressed problems of late reporting of health data from health facilities, districts, and provincial health departments by setting performance targets and comparing reporting performance through a transparent data sharing system. This has resulted in **reduced late reporting** and has helped to **improve data quality** overall.

In **Ethiopia**, an integrated and simplified HMIS – supplemented by standardized guidelines, information-use manuals, and training and supervision – has improved the completeness, timeliness and better use of information for decision making.⁵ This has resulted in **better service coverage and quality**, and has accelerated the roll-out of the new HMIS.

⁴ Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Sierra Leone (2010)

⁵ Federal Ministry of Health of Ethiopia (2010). Policy and Practice: Information for Action. *Quarterly Health Bulletin* Vol 3 no 1: 47 – 54¹

Saving money

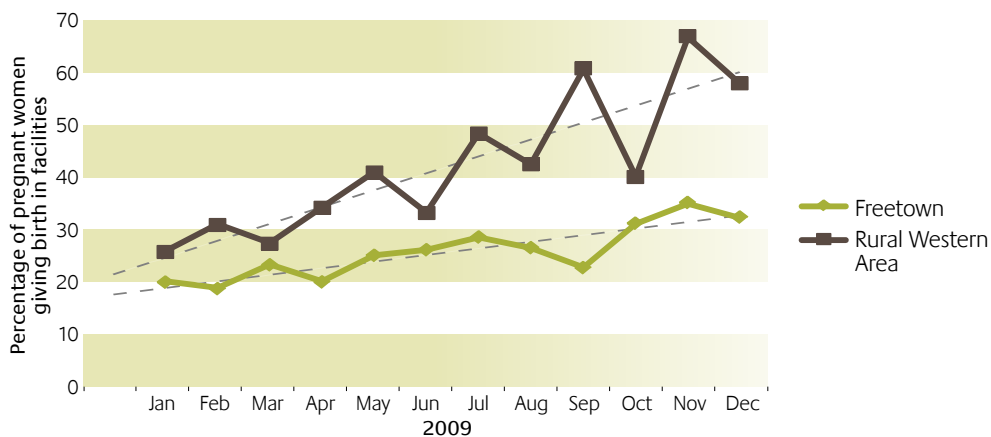
In **Belize**, the Belize Health Information System (BHIS) has revitalised the HIS module for estimating needs, procurement, storage and distribution of pharmaceuticals and other medical supplies. In addition to improving the reliability of the supply of essential health commodities, Belize has been able to realize measurable efficiencies. These include the virtual elimination of stockouts of drugs and supplies, thereby avoiding wasteful and expensive destruction of expired essential commodities. This has led to an estimated **cost saving of US\$ 500,000 in 2009** alone, at a time when Belize was ordering and using more medical supplies than in prior years.

National spending for medical supplies and pharmaceuticals, Belize, 2005–09 ⁶



Using HIS to achieve better health

Women giving birth in health facilities, Western District, Sierra Leone, 2009⁷

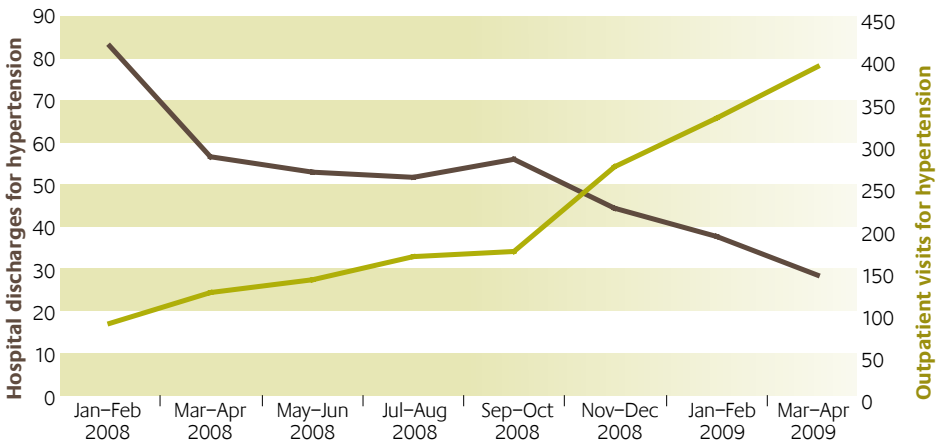


In **Sierra Leone**, in an effort to reduce maternal mortality linked to mothers giving birth at home and in the community, the District Medical Officer (DMO) in Western Area District – which includes the capital, Freetown – used the revitalized national HIS to track trends of where mothers delivered. With a better understanding of why mothers decide to deliver at home, an intervention was designed to reduce maternal mortality by encouraging mothers to deliver in health facilities. The DMO mobilized the local chiefs to reach out to the community and to traditional midwives to communicate the life-saving message and to encourage mothers to deliver at health facilities. In addition, the DMO revised its policy to allow traditional midwives to assist deliveries at health facilities and to reduce the fees for delivering at health facilities. As a result, **the number and proportion of mothers delivering in health facilities more than doubled** from January to December 2009. The strengthened health information was used to identify the problem of high maternal mortality, to understand contributing factors, to design a relevant intervention with the active participation of civil society, and to track the effect of implementing that intervention.

⁷ Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Sierra Leone (2010)

Belize has used health information to identify a critical health care issue, to design an intervention, and to monitor the effect of the intervention. The Government of Belize analysed routine health data from the BHIS and identified an excess of hospitalizations for hypertension among the elderly population. In response to this situation, the Ministry of Health took public health action to increase awareness about hypertension among the elderly, introducing population-based screening for hypertension targeting the elderly and carrying out refresher training on outpatient diagnosis and management of hypertension for clinicians. As a result, **hypertension diagnosis and management among the elderly has improved**, hospitalizations for malignant hypertension have decreased, and outpatient visits for hypertension have increased. This has led to better health outcomes for the elderly and has reduced costs of health care.⁸

Hypertension among patients aged >65 years: Hospital discharges and outpatient visits, Belize, Jan 2008 to April 2009⁹

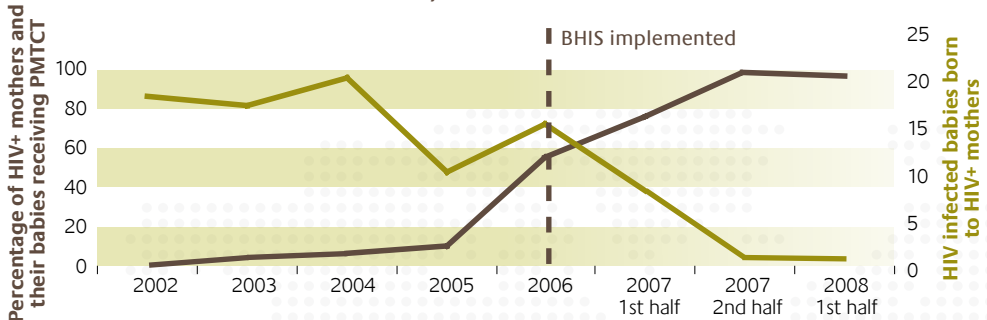


⁸ Ministry of Health, Belize (2009)

⁹ Ministry of Health, Belize (2009)

Saving lives

Percentage of HIV+ pregnant women receiving full PMTCT of HIV and number of HIV infected babies born to HIV+ women, Belize, 2002 – 08¹⁰



In **Belize**, the electronic medical record system—a BHIS core component—facilitates close follow-up of HIV-positive pregnant women, assuring antiretroviral treatment for both the mothers and their babies at the time of birth. This has allowed the country to meet WHO-recommended national standards. With the ability to track individual patients and with real-time access to their health records, Belize achieved nearly 100% implementation of its policy on prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) and has **virtually eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV** in the country.¹¹

A study on child survival in **Tanzania**¹² suggests that substantial increases in public spending on health between 1999 and 2008 were responsible for saving the lives of 280,000 children. The country’s strengthened health information system, developed with that investment, was critical for **improving child health and survival**, with information from the HIS being used to improve district health service planning and management. However, this study also notes that “the general scarcity of data and analyses continues to limit programme efforts and monitoring of progress”. This highlights the importance of HIS strengthening for the achievement of the fourth Millennium Development Goal – to reduce under-five mortality rate by two-thirds by 2015.

¹⁰ Ministry of Health, Belize (2009)

¹¹ Ministry of Health, Belize (2009)

¹² Masanja H, de Savigny D, Smithson, Schellenberg J, John T, Mbuya C, Upunda G, Boerma T, Victor C, Smith T, Mshinda H. (2008) Child survival gains in Tanzania: analysis of data from demographic and health surveys. *Lancet*, 371: 1276 – 1283

Conclusions

1. There is **growing global awareness** of the importance of using health and population information for **decision making** and the essential role of using information to reach more people with better quality health services, and to achieve, and measure, ambitious national and global health targets, including the Millennium Development Goals.
2. Since its inception in 2005, **HMN has galvanized new leadership** in assisting countries to use health and population information to improve the quality of health care, to improve health status and to save lives. ***HMN's Framework and Standards for Country Health Information Systems*** (the HMN Framework) is the global standard for health information systems development and serves as the reference for HIS strengthening at country level.
3. HMN has led the drive to **strengthen national health information systems** and to reinvigorate the use of information for decision making. The principles of the HMN Framework are being applied in **83 countries worldwide**, representing nearly 70% of low and lower-middle countries globally. The advances in HIS strengthening have accelerated progress in managing for results and other elements of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action.
4. The demand for stronger national HIS is growing as is the drive to use **better information for decision making, for policy formulation** as well as planning, managing and evaluating health programmes. Moreover, there is emerging evidence showing that the use of better quality health information **improves the quality of health care**, leads to better health outcomes, and contributes to saving lives.



5. There is increasing evidence that a **strengthened HIS produces better quality information** that is being used for decision making, and that information-driven decisions lead to:
 - a. **Cost savings and more efficient use of resources.** Countries are better equipped to respond to economic crises – by using better information they can provide better quality services for less money. Through improved procurement of pharmaceutical and health commodities, and improved logistics and management.
 - b. **Improved coverage and quality of essential health interventions.** The use of information to draw attention to health hotspots like maternal and newborn mortality, to identify possible causes and to take informed public health action, thereby improving birth outcomes and saving the lives of mothers and babies.
 - c. **Saving lives.** Identifying and tracking HIV+ mothers in Belize ensures that they and their babies receive treatment to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV at the time of birth. In Tanzania investments in HIS strengthening have led to improved health services, saving the lives of 280,000 children over ten years.

6. Through the work of the HMN partnership, more countries are **improving health care, improving health outcomes, and saving lives** through better availability and use of information for decision making. The promise of the HMN Framework is increasingly being realized in countries around the world, demonstrating the power of **better information • better decisions • better health.**

Better information.
Better decisions.
Better health.



HMN is the first global partnership dedicated to strengthening national health information systems.

Health information is the cornerstone of an optimal health system, vital for health and development workers at all levels to make best use of the finite resources available to them.

Getting the right information, at the right time, into the hands of health workers in towns and villages, and officials and policy makers in health ministries and

international development agencies, enables them to make informed decisions. And where public health is concerned, the difference between good decisions and poor decisions can mean the difference between life and death.

HMN operates as a network of global, regional and country partners providing a sustainable solution in the form of a framework and roadmap to assess and improve country health information systems and enable better health for all.



**World Health
Organization**

Health Metrics Network

20 Avenue Appia
1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

t +41 (0)22 791 5494
f +41 (0)22 791 5855
healthmetrics@who.int

www.healthmetricsnetwork.org

WHO/HMN/10.2