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AFRICA BIODIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE GROUP

Population, Health and Environment

Expert Workshop Summary

November 21, 2019

WWF Office, Washington DC

Introduction

With the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG) hosted a meeting of 20 health, development and conservation experts to examine the benefits of integrated Population, Health and Environment programs. Recognizing that human population growth is a main threat to biodiversity loss in sub-Saharan Africa, the ABCG PHE task group (including staff from Conservation International, the Jane Goodall Institute and World Wildlife Fund) explored the definition of integration with respect to PHE, the various ways to measure integration and approaches to promote integrated PHE successes.

Participants

Ashleigh Baker from Foundations for Success facilitated the workshop. PHE experts contributed valuable technical insights to the discussion including: Janet Edmond, Conservation International; Stella Mercurio, the Jane Goodall Institute; Nathalie Simoneau, World Wildlife Fund US; Kristen Patterson, Population Reference Bureau; Laura Robson, Blue Ventures; Vik Mohan, Blue Ventures; Liz Creel, John Snow International; Natalie Bailey, USAID Biodiversity Office; Judy Oglethorpe, WWF US; Cheryl Margoluis, Pathfinder International; Cara Honzak, Pathfinder International; Giulia Besana, The Nature Conservancy Tanzania; Tiana Rahagalala, University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center (URI CRC); Elin Torell, URI CRC; Sarah Gaines, URI CRC, Rebecca, Goodman, ABCG; and Lynne Gaffikin, PHE Expert.

Purpose

The objectives of the meeting were to better articulate the key assumptions that could be tested over time AND/OR learning questions that could be tracked AND/OR ways of measuring the concept AND/OR best practices on how to effectively implement such complex projects. To set the stage, three presentations framed the current thinking on PHE approaches:

- Kristen Patterson from Population Reference Bureau gave an overview of the PACE Project's accomplishments providing country support to high priority family planning countries with capacity building, knowledge management, and policy advocacy, which complement the ABCG PHE task objectives.

- Laura Robson from Blue Ventures presented a brief overview of their [latest research](#) on PHE in Madagascar, which unpacked assumptions around PHE programming in coastal environments.
- Cheryl Margoluis from Pathfinder International shared lessons from the PHE work in Tanzania about how communities will adopt better conservation or natural resource management practices if they are integrated with family planning and PHE approaches.

Following the presentations, the group explored one of the fundamental assumptions of the value of integrated Population, Health and Environment (PHE) projects - that there are synergistic benefits to implementing and cross-sectoral “integrated” approach to meet human and ecosystem health outcomes. Over the past 20 years, many health and conservation organizations have implemented PHE projects and conducted research to demonstrate these benefits or value added. Nevertheless, both conservation community and donor agencies are recognizing a consistent knowledge gap and lack of consensus on why we integrate health activities into conservation projects; what added benefits are expected (and are realistic), and how exactly integrated PHE leads to improved conservation outcomes (the Theory of Change). Participants agreed by the end of the workshop to use the following definition for developing the ABCG PHE reference sheet in the Spring 2020.

- A strategic holistic approach to meeting people’s needs for health including reproductive health and maintaining restoring ecosystem services for greater impact environmental and social impact at multiple levels

Next Steps

The expected output of the workshop was a PHE Reference sheet (“cheat sheet”) or check list for potential project design and implementation staff to use to address integration in cross-sectoral, PHE projects. The workshop objectives were very ambitious, and participants explored the various ways to measure integration and approaches to promote integrated PHE successes.