mHealth projects: some critical issues

mHealth for maternal and newborn health in low-resource settings, Sierra Leone

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Mannion Daniels

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Overview

- Refer to Pres 1

Critical issues:
- Context, technology, operations
- Health system challenges
- Vision and division

Context, technology, operations

- Technology

- Inter-operability

- Cost

- Battery charging

- Airtime

Context, technology, operations (2)

- Privacy & confidentiality

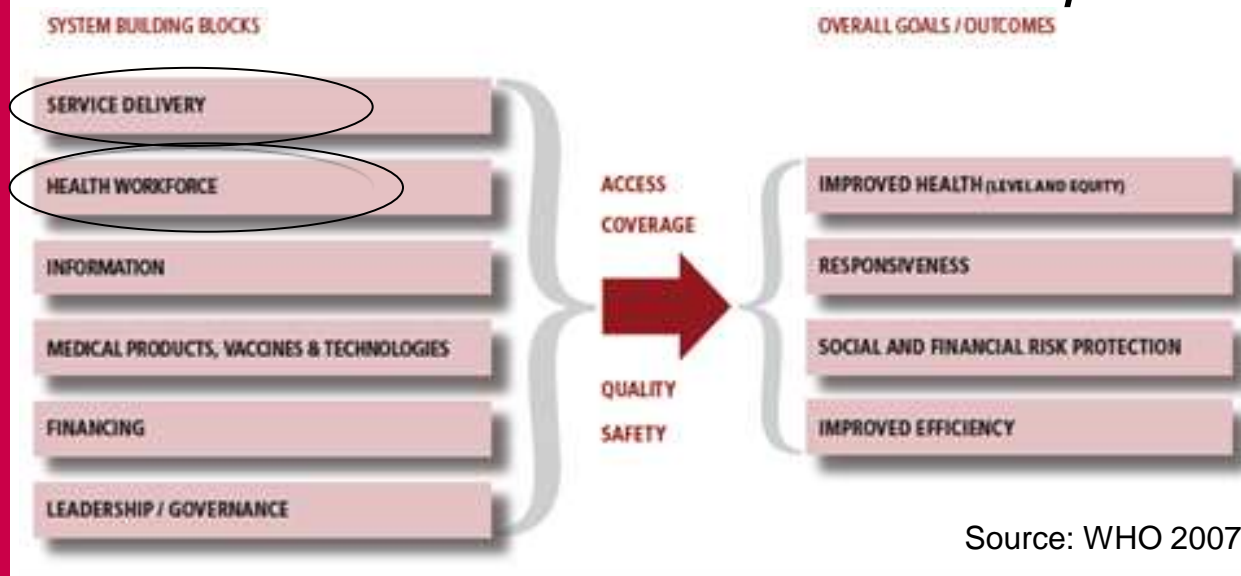- Literacy

- Language

- Opt-in approach

Health system challenges

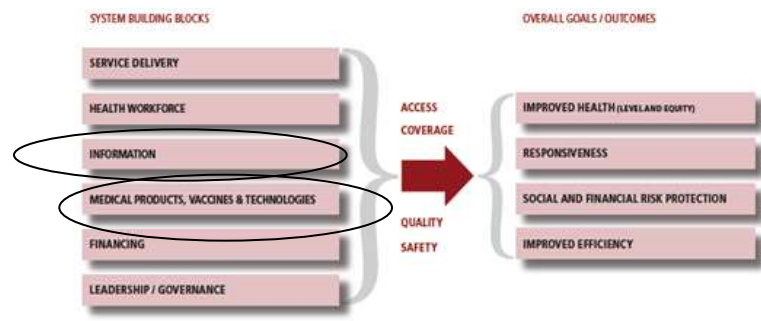❑ **Service delivery**: potential to increase service use, efficiency. *Risk: clients who should come, only call*

❑ **Health workforce**: opportunity for learning; need to solve logistics. *Risk: increased workload >protocol needed?*

SYSTEM BUILDING BLOCKS

SERVICE DELIVERY

HEALTH WORKFORCE

INFORMATION

MEDICAL PRODUCTS, VACCINES & TECHNOLOGIES

FINANCING

LEADERSHIP / GOVERNANCE

ACCESS
COVERAGE

QUALITY
SAFETY

OVERALL GOALS / OUTCOMES

IMPROVED HEALTH (LEVEL AND EQUITY)

RESPONSIVENESS

SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL RISK PROTECTION

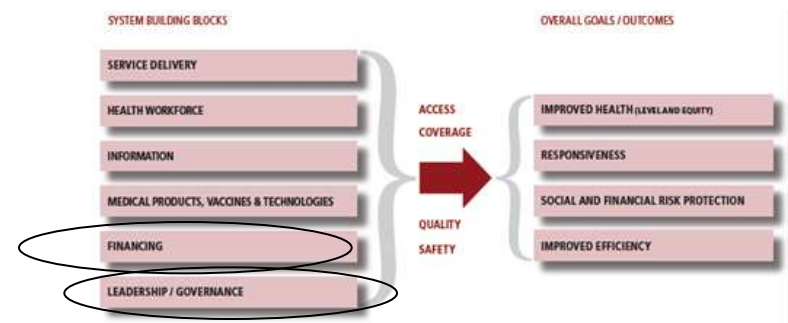IMPROVED EFFICIENCY

Source: WHO 2007

Health system challenges (2)

❑ Information (to HW, clients) key potential, explore options vis-à-vis illiteracy; need to create standards (what, when, whom)

❑ Technologies: choice of technology, applications, inter-operability, cost to HW, cost to clients, languages, confidentiality. *Risk: cost to clients widens information gap >options?*

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Health system challenges (3)

❑ **Financing**: explore money transfer options, service vouchers?

❑ **Governance**: need for regulatory framework, national coordination, assess sustainability, PPP.

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Vision and division

Hype vs. Reality

- Often focus on gadgets and technology, not health system and health needs
- But no magic bullet?
- ➢mHealth shouldn't be about 'm' but

  about 'health'…
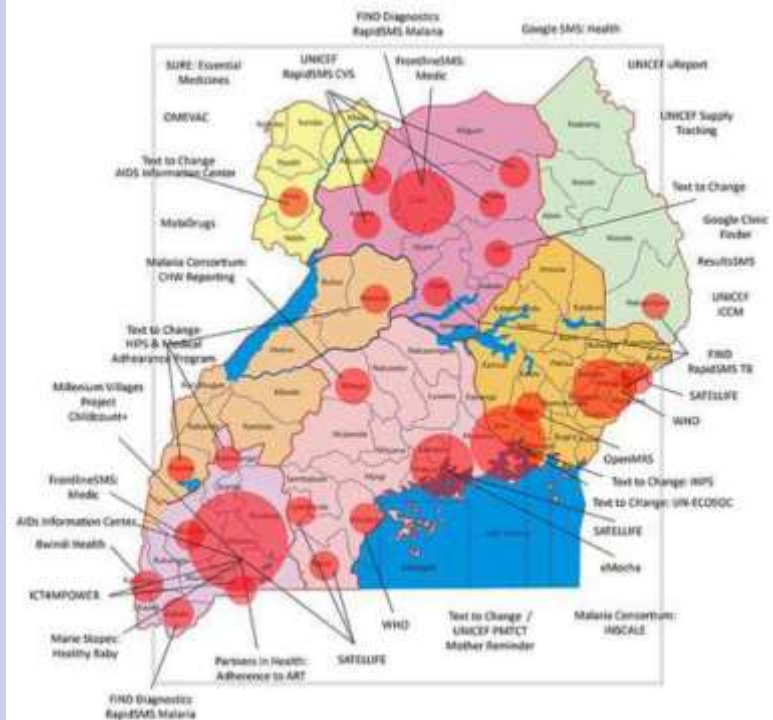
Vision and division (2)

Public vs. private _or_ PPP?

•Natural meeting ground for not-for-profit and for-profit partners

•Opportunities exist…

•…but public and private interests dont always coincide

Vision and division (3)

Governance, scaling up

- Many pilots – where's the evidence?

- Stronger mHealth stewardship needed to ensure
  - cost-effectiveness
  - benefits to the public

Vision and division (4)

The mobile divide

- Many can access phones, technology…
- …but some others cant

- Mobile revolution → new divide?

- Emphasis needed on 'simple', not 'smart'?

References

Labrique AB (2012), Mainstreaming mHealth: Shifting focus from the "m" to the 'Health". Presentation during the Mobile Health Summit, Cape Town, 30-31 May. See www.mobilehealthsummit.com.

Van Gemert-Pijnen JEWC, Wynchank S., Covvey H.D. and Ossebaard H. C. 2012. Improving the credibility of electronic health technologies. Bull World Health Organ 201(90):323.

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