

ACSM at Country Level Core Group Meeting
Notes and Action Points
15 October, 2008 - Paris



Participants (Country Level only)

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Overview

The two Core Groups of the ACSM Working Group met for a joint meeting in Paris on 15 October 2008. The meeting started in a plenary, where the Chair, Vice Chair and the Executive Secretary of the Stop TB Partnership gave introductions and set the ground for discussions on the future of the ACSM Working Group (based on a concept note drafted by the Chair and discussed previously at a meeting with Vice Chair and the Secretariat).

After the plenary the ACSM SWG continued in the two entities (Global and Country Level) having separate meetings with their respective agendas, and ended the day with a plenary to share the main results of the discussions. In the Country Level SG it was agreed that moving this group into the DOTS Expansion Working Group made technical sense and there were no objections raised to the proposal. The main agenda for the Global Advocacy Group was to discuss the new structure based on the draft document sent out previously to the meeting.

Discussions in plenary (pre and post separate meetings) for the Global Advocacy for Resource Mobilization Sub Group dealt with Issues as: what should happen to this Sub Group, what a new entity may be and what its role should be. More discussions were held after the meeting, during the Union Conference in a meeting with the Global Group and via emails.

This note focuses on the discussions that were held at the ACSM Country Level Core Group meeting, which reviewed progress and made decisions on priority actions for the Sub Group for 2009. The discussion was based on the action points from last year's meeting in Cape Town and on the Biennium Workplan of the ACSM Working Group.

It is important to note that this was the first meeting of the new Core Group of the ACSM Country Level Sub Group and therefore administrative practicalities, such as teleconferences was also discussed and are summarized below.

Best practices at country level

Progress

- Bimonthly E-updates that have latest on WG and ACSM Partner activities, tools and publication and other significant event is distributed via email to all WG members and posted online at:
http://www.stoptb.org/resource_center/communique_and_newsletters.asp#aeu
- Template for easy and consistent entry of ACSM best practice was developed and disseminated via email. Web page on best practices has been made (http://www.stoptb.org/wg/advocacy_communication/acsmcl/bestpractice.asp) but it is not well utilized.

Discussion

E-update very useful at country level, however language is very specific for insiders (TBP partners), so we need to find a way so that it is more accessible to other local stakeholders in ACSM. Some ideas include encouraging all Sub Group members to forward to their country-level counterparts the e-update, or select pieces of news that are relevant. Country-level Sub Group members could share relevant information at NTP meetings. E-update could also be a tool used by the National Partnership Network to highlight the work that is ongoing.

Web page on best practices: Need to further discuss how to make this page more active and encourage partners to submit best practices. Idea to monitor and track usage and download. Perhaps consider translation into other languages.

Next Steps and 2009 deliverable

ACSM Best Practice document

The Core Group agreed one of the priorities is to document best practices and create an evidence base to garner more support for strategic ACSM at country level.

Action point:

- Secretariat to send to all Sub Group members and ACSM partners the template for submission.
- Core/Sub Group members to forward to their partners and encourage those implementing ACSM activities to submit their best practice.
- Apart from direct submissions, research will also be done on databases from previous Conferences for ACSM best practices.
- After submission period has ended, Secretariat to hire professional to follow up on accepted submissions and to prepare a consistent document to launch in Brazil at the Stop TB Partnership Partners' Forum. If Core Group members know someone who is qualified to do this, please send their contact info, with CV to Young-Ae at the Secretariat (chuy@who.int).

ACSM Symposium - Brazil, March 2009

The Core Group agreed the Partners' Forum would be an ideal venue to launch the ACSM Best Practice document and to host an ACSM Symposium to present on successful ACSM initiatives and discuss with non-ACSM stakeholders the challenges and gaps in ACSM for TB control.

Action point:

- Secretariat to discuss with Partners' Forum focal point the possibility of adding the ACSM Symposium in the official agenda.

Union Conference - Mexico, December 2009

Online submission deadline for symposium for next year's Union Conference was on 18 October, but there is an extended deadline until the end of October. The Core Group agreed to submit a request to have a Symposium on ACSM.

Action point:

- Secretariat to follow up with Partnership staff on the submission date and procedure.

Quality of Technical Assistance

Progress

- Regional ACSM Planning Workshops for countries with approved ACSM funds from Global Fund have been held in Asia, Eastern Mediterranean and African Regions. Workshop planned in December in Panama and in 2009 for Eastern Europe. These Workshops are specific to helping identify bottlenecks to implementation of GF grants. Each country developed their specific action plan, which also includes identification of technical assistance that is required. Follow up to these workshops are crucial and are being done by WHO Regional Focal Points and/or the Secretariat.
- Individual country TA: with the coordination of TBTEAM, technical assistance on ACSM (planning, implementing and monitoring) is ongoing and is based on country-driven requests. The types of TA that is available is varied, depending on the need of the country. ACSM consultants are also part of many general country review missions.

Discussion

A more broader discussion specific to engagement of civil society was held and is summarized in the section "Civil Society Strengthening".

In terms of TA, a suggestion to facilitate country exchanges was made. The importance of follow-up to all TAs and Workshops was emphasized, so that a mission does not end simply with a plan or a report, but also back stopping of effective implementation of agreed activities and recommendations.

It was also noted that because of funding and specific donor requirements, there is a lot of TA going to countries with Global Fund grants for ACSM. However, Core Group members stressed the need also to focus on non-GF countries and those that may not be high priority, but still need assistance.

Next Steps and 2009 deliverable

Pool of consultants

It was agreed that there is a need to have a consolidated pool of ACSM consultants, by Region and by expertise - whether proposal writing, A C SM Planning and quality issues in implementation or M & E. Once there is a list, Core Group members agreed it would be effective to have training workshops of the existing pool of consultants, emphasizing on sharing of experiences and skills, as well as another training for junior-level local consultants. The pool of ACSM consultants will be integrated into the TBTEAM database, as this will be the tool that all partners will be using to coordinate all types of TA.

Action point:

- Secretariat to start process of identifying ACSM consultants currently providing TA.
- Core Group members to provide names and CVs of ACSM consultants they know and who are working at the country level (ongoing activity).
- Core Group to continue discussions on a possible workshop for consultants, and to identify a partner who already has a curriculum that can be adapted.
- Revision of existing curricula and production of final one
- Secretariat to look for possible financing for trainings once objectives and curriculum are defined

Systematic collection of ACSM data

Progress

Every year, a questionnaire is sent out by WHO to all Member States, to collect TB data for the annual TB control Report. For the 2008 Report, ACSM questions were included and both qualitative and quantitative data were reported and documented in the final report. These data are only published for HBCs. The TB Control Report compiles data from over 200 countries and territories each year, monitoring the scale and direction of TB epidemics, implementation and impact of the Stop TB Strategy, and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Discussion

Core Group members agreed the use of this questionnaire should be maximized to get ACSM-related data from countries. There is a need for stronger quantitative ACSM indicators that are measurable and show impact at the country level. Need also to find out how to get access and use the data from non-HBCs.

Next Steps and 2009 deliverable

Data from TB Control

- Small group to discuss and give suggestions on how to improve reporting and type of data gathered for Component 5 of the Stop TB Strategy. Focal person: Lana Velebit
- Lana Velebit: Focal point to send related information to Core Group.

Civil Society Strengthening

Progress

After dismantling of Patient-led Task Force, the three community representatives to the ACSM working group met in Addis Ababa to discuss patient issues and priorities. The TB Community Zone, open during the Union Conference, aimed at providing all community members a chance to display their material, share experiences and network with other community members.

Jacob and Banza as organizers of the Zone, agreed to use the meeting to share how patients in various countries led initiatives that brought about positive results. They will compile and share the document with the Core Group.

It is important to note that the Stop TB Partnership Secretariat will soon start the recruitment process for a full-time Civil Society Officer, to focus on empowering communities and liaising with Civil Society.

Discussion

Long discussion was held on how to better engage civil society at the country level. There are a lot of organizations doing ACSM in countries, but they are not always linked to NTP efforts, and are not brought at planning stage or as possible participants to workshops.

NGOs need more support - if not from NTP then perhaps forming of partnership or national coalition could help, as shown in the example of Ghana, which tapped into existing HIV NGO network to increase the awareness and work on TB.

Next Steps and 2009 deliverable

Civil society engagement and empowerment

- Discussion should continue on this topic. Focal person: Jacob Kayombo
- When recruitment goes online, Core Group members to encourage all interested to apply for the position of Civil Society Officer.

- Chief Austin, who is the Core Group member from the National Partnerships network to ensure linkage between the two groups and report back on what needs of the Network the Country Level Sub Group could address in 2009.
- Challenge Facility for Civil Society (<http://www.stoptb.org/bi/cfcs/>), a good resource for grass-roots organizations. Need to consider this for next round and to promote it to all organizations that need support. Also, get feedback on best practice from last year's grantees.

ACSM tools

Progress

Production and dissemination of ACSM Handbook and KAP Survey Guide. These are essential for all country-level implementers wanting to conduct ACSM for TB control. Hard copies have been mailed to all NTPs, Stop TB Partnership partners, and ACSM Working Group members. They have also been distributed at all major events, and are available for download online: http://www.stoptb.org/resource_center/documents.asp

"Community involvement in tuberculosis care and prevention; Towards partnerships for health. Guiding principles and recommendations based on a WHO review" was also published but not yet distributed in hard copy.

Discussion

Core Group members agreed that there is a need to further promote all tools at country level.

On the community guidelines, it was agreed that they should be disseminated not only to NTPs, but also to other partners at country level. Although the guidelines are recommendations that need to be adapted to the country context, it was agreed that it would be useful to translate the guidelines asap into key languages such as French and Spanish.

Next Steps and 2009 deliverable

Community Guidelines

- Core Group to widely promote this document at country level. Need to create an action plan for effective roll-out. For hard copies, please email Lana (velebitl@who.int).

Monitoring and Evaluation for ACSM

It was agreed that M & E for ACSM remains weakness in most countries and programmes. Core Group members agreed that the Sub Group should make the production of a simple, M & E for ACSM "guide" for implementers at country level.

Action point:

- Core Group to decide if there is a partner with M&E expertise to take on this project.
- Once partner or person to write is identified, an outline of the key topics in document to be circulated to Core and Sub Group for input.



Advocacy, Communications and Social Mobilization at Country Level Core Group

Partnering at National Level:

The National Partnerships Network is currently working on a best practice document on countries that have succeeded in forming a national partnership.

Action point:

- Coordinate with Network and provide input/feedback into the document as needed.

Core Group coordination

- It was agreed that teleconferences should be held when there is a specific issue to be discussed. If there are no pressing issues, teleconferences will be held bi-monthly and notes will be posted online:
http://www.stoptb.org/wg/advocacy_communication/acsmcl/core.asp
- The next meeting of the Core Group and Sub Group will be held at the Partners' Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (23-25 March 2009).
- Next conference call: the Secretariat, after discussing with the Chair will send out proposed dates for the next teleconference call (late November or early December). We will discuss the outcome of the discussions at the Coordinating Board relating to the ACSM Working Group, Follow up to the action points on this document and to start preparing for activities during the Partners' Forum.
- Hard copies of the 10-year Framework for Action for ACSM at Country Level were handed out at the Core Group meeting. It was requested that Core Group members review the document, so we can discuss in depth of where we are in the targets, and if there is a need to revise contents of the Framework. The Framework can also be found online at: http://www.stoptb.org/resource_center/assets/documents/TB-ADVOCACY.pdf



**Advocacy, Communications and
Social Mobilization at Country
Level Core Group**

Matrix of Sub Group Activities for 2009

Activity	Breakdown	Partner/Focal Point	Deadline	Comments
ACSM Best Practice Document	Dissemination of submission template to all ACSM stakeholders.	Secretariat and Core/Sub Group members should actively reach out and encourage people/organizations to send in their best practice.	Submission deadline will be 21 November (to give enough time for follow up and production for March 2009)	
	Hire consultant to follow up on selected submissions and write the document	Core Group members to identify suitable candidate to take on project	Need to identify someone by 14 November to get their contract started and to engage them in selection process.	
	Review of document	Core Group members	Document should be ready for review by CG members by mid January	
ACSM Symposium in Brazil	Discussion to add Symposium to official agenda	Secretariat		
	Core Group teleconference to discuss content of Symposium and potential speakers	Secretariat to schedule call once final decision has been made.		



**Advocacy, Communications and
Social Mobilization at Country
Level Core Group**

ACSM Symposium in Mexico, Union Conference 2009	Discussions on procedure for submitting proposals	Secretariat to discuss and get back to Core Group		
	Core Group teleconference to discuss content and potential speakers	To schedule once decision has been made.		
Pool of ACSM consultants	Identifying current ACSM consultants	Core and Sub Group members to provide names and CVs of those who are involved in providing ACSM TA.		
	Creating workshop curriculum for ACSM Consultants	Identify partner who has adaptable curriculum, or that is interested in coordinating this project.		
Data in TB control report	Lana to send Core Group members more information on this year's questionnaire			
	Core Group to discuss how to best use the data from the countries	Agenda item for next conference call.		
M&E for ACSM tool	Identify partner with M&E expertise to develop the tool	Core Group or Sub Group		