

Technical Reference Team

Cross-cutting focus: Advocacy

Background

The UN Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and Children (the Commission) was formed in 2012 by the UN Secretary-General as part of the global Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) movement. EWEC challenges the global community to increase access to and appropriate use of essential medicines, medical devices, and health supplies that effectively address the leading preventable causes of death during pregnancy, childbirth, and childhood.

Led by a wide range of high-level leaders from around the world, the Commission developed a framework for action on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (RMNCH) products that can be applied nationally and utilized in global RMNCH initiatives. The framework outlines a priority list of 13 commodities, key barriers to access and use, and 10 cross-cutting recommendations to rapidly increase both access and use. By increasing access to and use of these 13 commodities, it is estimated that 6 million women and children can be saved by 2017.

Moving forward

To help carry forward the Commission's recommendations at the global and national levels, **Global Technical Reference Teams (TRT)** were established. One group was formed for each of the 13 commodities and 10 recommendations, and an advocacy working group is dedicated to advancing cross-cutting goals. The groups carry out their work through a variety of mechanisms, including guidance documents and tools to support countries in their efforts to implement recommendations and address global and regional bottlenecks. These reference teams are coordinated by a Strategy and Coordination Team hosted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).



PATH/Evelyn Hockstein

Policy advocacy is an important activity to ensuring lifesaving commodities reach people who need them, like this mother and her newborn in Nigeria.

Spotlight on Advocacy

Dedicated and coordinated advocacy is essential to ensuring the necessary resources, policies, and political will are available to realize the Commission's recommendations and to scale up and sustain expanded access to RMNCH commodities.

The Advocacy TRT seeks to promote joint planning and advocacy to ensure that an amplified and united voice of relevant stakeholders from governments to the private sector to civil society are motivating the implementation of global and country commitments to improve access to life-saving commodities for women and children. Specifically, the TRT is working to raise visibility and build support at the global, national, and sub-national levels for the implementation of the eight pathfinding¹ countries' Commission-related plans.

Group membership

PATH, as a representative and board alternate of the Partnership for Maternal Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), is serving as the lead convener. Recently

¹ Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Uganda.

formed, the Advocacy TRT is comprised of more than 80 members. It is guided by a steering committee of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Population Action International, PMNCH, the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition, the United Nations Foundation, the World Health Organization, and World Vision International.

Progress to date

The Advocacy TRT is seeking to align its advocacy activities both globally and nationally with related EWEC initiatives and working groups. As such, it has recently formed a steering committee wherein the members represent initiatives under the EWEC umbrella (e.g., Family Planning 2020, Every Newborn, A Promise Renewed). The steering committee is working with the larger group to map related advocacy activities, plans, and processes both globally and within EWEC countries to identify opportunities for collaboration and to ensure focus on the 10 recommendations and 13 commodities as appropriate.

The Advocacy TRT is also creating an online toolkit that provides a variety of information and advocacy resources for stakeholders in EWEC countries, including details on global technical reference teams and national plans, guidance on engaging key stakeholders in implementing the recommendations and plans, suggestions of advocacy activities, and messaging and communications tools. A draft of the toolkit, initially focused on the 10 recommendations and maternal health and family planning commodities, will be shared for feedback by pathfinding countries in July 2013. Sections on newborn and child health commodities will be added.

Upcoming activities

The Advocacy TRT will identify advocacy focal points in select pathfinding countries to work with the Ministry of Health and other relevant stakeholders to develop an advocacy strategy to build support for and advance the implementation of their national plan in alignment with larger RMNCH initiatives and plans operating at

the country level. The Advocacy TRT and the advocacy focal points will also work within select pathfinder countries to provide policy development and resource mobilization support as indicated by the national plan and advocacy strategy. Globally, the Advocacy TRT will work to identify high-level champions and media opportunities to raise visibility and build support for the Commission's recommendations and the efforts of the pathfinding countries to expand access to life-saving commodities during major mobilization moments and events, such as the upcoming United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2013.

Available resources

The Advocacy TRT is developing a series of advocacy tools for use globally and within EWEC countries, including:

- Briefs on technical reference teams (July 2013).
- An advocacy toolkit (August 2013).
- A messaging framework highlighting the importance of the 13 commodities and 10 recommendations (August 2013).
- An advocacy activities calendar (July 2013).
- An advocacy guide for UNGA (September 2013).
- A pathfinding country media advocacy guide (September 2013).
- Country success stories (on-going).

The Advocacy TRT has dedicated funding to provide targeted technical assistance to the global TRTs as well as four pathfinding countries to both develop and implement an advocacy strategy to accelerate the execution of their plans. The Advocacy TRT can provide more limited technical assistance to stakeholders within EWEC countries on how to leverage the Commission platform to advance commodity-related advocacy.

Contact us

For more information or to request tools and technical assistance, please contact Kristy Kade, PATH (kkade@path.org).