Introduction and overview on program sustainability

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Disclosures for:  
Sunny Kim

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<tr>
<th>AFFILIATION/FINANCIAL INTERESTS</th>
<th>CORPORATE ORGANIZATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grants/Research Support:</td>
<td>IFPRI</td>
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<td>Scientific Advisory Board/Consultant:</td>
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“In 2012, there will be a major strategic shift in global health, away from development and toward sustainability.” (Lancet editorial, 2012)
Rationale and challenges

• “Not all innovations should last or endure for long periods of time.” (Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone, 1998)

• When failure in program sustainability presents serious problems:
  1) Problem that a program was established to address remains/recurs
  2) Programs (at great costs) have not yet reached full fruition
  3) Diminished community support and trust with abrupt or inappropriate termination.

• Importance for nutrition: address ongoing problems; involve multiple interventions, especially adoption of recommended behaviors/practices; and limited project funds.
• What is it that we expect to be sustained?

• How do we know if a program is sustained?

• How do we make a program sustainable?
Sustainability process within the program life cycle

- **Program design and initiation**
- **Sustainability process**
  - Implementation process
  - Planning process
  - Monitoring and evaluation
- **Program sustainability (or discontinuation)**

**Challenge:** “Building in the potential for sustainability while not knowing whether a particular intervention is going to achieve the intended outcomes.” (Willis et al., 2012)
“Sustainability is a new interest of the international donor community.”

Two studies in Central America and three studies in Africa, 1986 to 1989, USAID-sponsored health activities.

Project considered to be sustained if project activities and benefits continued at least 3 years after project life... project benefits could not be determined; therefore, continuing activities/services were likely to have produced continuing benefits.
Health service projects (training of health workers), construction of clinics and other infrastructure development, and water projects had most sustainable outputs.

Family planning, malaria control and nutrition planning projects had least capacity to be sustained.

Important factors – perceived effectiveness, project integration, financing (gov’t budget and cost recovery), training, mutually respectful negotiating process, community participation, and institutional strength.

Not as important – length and size of project, type and time period of technical assistance, coordination of various donors, and private sector.
## Perspectives in program sustainability

### PROGRAM

- **Termination of initial project funds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type *</th>
<th>Continuation of activities (within organizations)</th>
<th>Community capacity</th>
<th>Maintenance of health benefits or impact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td>Program activities/service delivery</td>
<td>Knowledge, practices and products (use)</td>
<td>Final outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<th>Theory/process</th>
<th>Organizational change</th>
<th>Institutionalization</th>
<th>Routinization</th>
<th>Normalization process</th>
<th>Capacity building</th>
<th>Behavior change</th>
<th>Adoption</th>
<th>Diffusion</th>
<th>Biological mechanisms</th>
<th>Psychosocial, ecological, etc.</th>
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| Factors* | Historical program, organizations, community, political/gov. and economic |

(*Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone, 1998)
Scheirer, 2005

- Review of 19 health-related studies (e.g. prevention, training, medical practices) in US and Canada, 1990-2003
- Methods varied substantially (mail or telephone surveys to case studies or site visits), no common time point (>2 years after external funding ended)
- Most studies did not differentiate among types of sustainability measures; most examined whether activities sustained by single question on a questionnaire or interview
- Consistent pattern that at least some type of sustainability is possible (>60% sites) but not guaranteed, with influential factors primarily related to organizational context
Review of conceptual frameworks and empirical studies (145 articles) about health program sustainability, 1980-2008

Of 84 empirical studies, 24 from low- and middle-income countries or disadvantaged populations in high-income countries

Different perspectives of sustainability, various methods, and wide range of associated factors

Complex systems encompassing programs, health problems and key stakeholders, and their dynamic interactions

Sustainability increased to the degree to which these components (above) of the system are connected and aligned.
Challenges ➔ Research needs

- What is it that we expect to be sustained?
  ➔ definitions, types of sustainability

- How do we know if a program is sustained?
  ➔ methods and measures

- How do we make a program sustainable?
  ➔ mediating processes, influencing factors

- Sustainability intertwined with implementation
  ➔ implementation research, prospective

“Exploration of sustainability in intervention research may assist in justifying a sustainability focus even in the absence of effectiveness [data].” (Willis et al, 2012)
References

Building evidence for sustainability of nutrition intervention programs in developing countries:

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<td>Introduction and overview of program sustainability</td>
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<td>Promoting sustainability in food aid programs: results from Bolivia and Honduras and lessons learned for future programming</td>
<td>Beatrice Rogers</td>
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<td>Key factors for promoting sustainability in food aid programs: hypothesis and results from Kenya</td>
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<td>Sustainability of impact: adoption and consumption of a biofortified crop in Uganda</td>
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<td>Eric Sarriot</td>
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<td>Open discussion</td>
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