

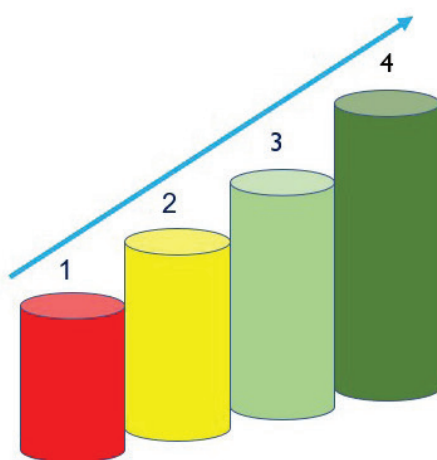
## Strengthening Regional Referral Health Systems: A Year of Progress

In 2019, a significant milestone was reached as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) awarded a 5-year MOH-CDC Cooperative Agreement Grant to Ministry of Health – AIDS Control Program (MOH-ACP). Specifically, for the Regional Referral Hospitals (RRHs), the aim was to strengthen planning, coordination and monitoring of decentralized HIV and TB service delivery. Focus was placed on improving the six health system building blocks of governance and leadership, supply chain, financing, information systems, health workforce and HIV and

TB service delivery. These RRHs include Arua, Hoima, Fort Portal, Masaka, Mubende, Naguru, Entebbe, Soroti, Yumbe, and Kayunga.

In 2021, MakSPH-METS in collaboration with MoH designed a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) Health System building blocks was developed. This framework employs a Progression Model to measure improvements in health systems capacity.

### The progression model



The Progression Model



A tool for stepwise, systematic development, which demonstrates an evolutionary path to improvement



It helps to identify gaps between the actual and desired states



Measures progression in health system capacity in a linear manner based on a set of criteria.

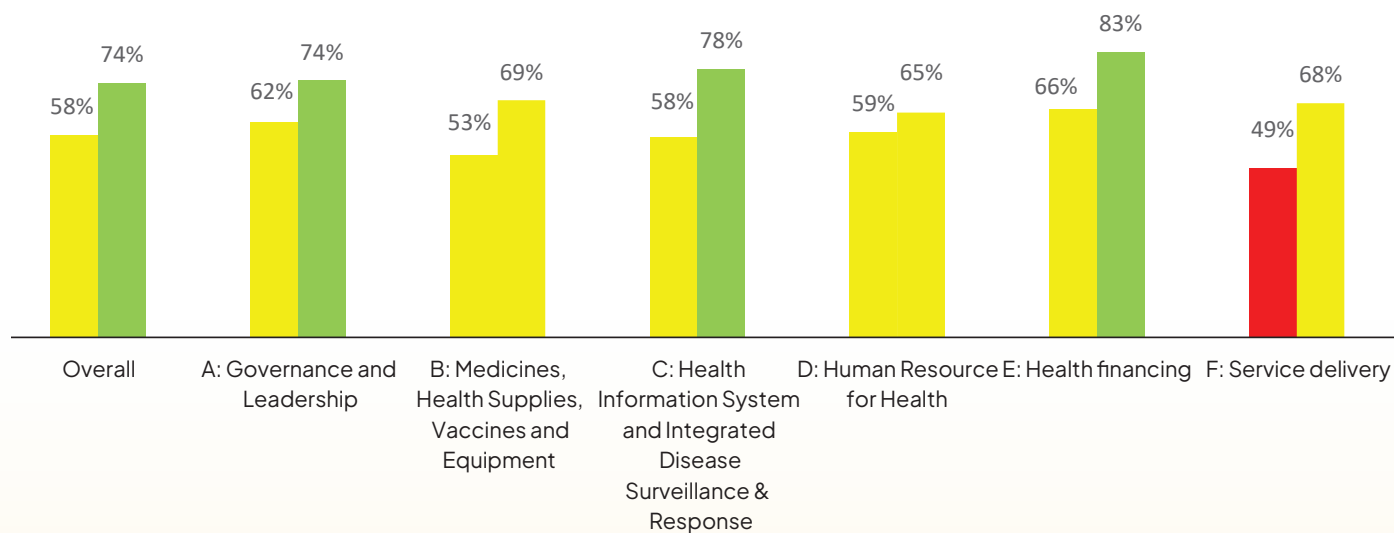


Can be used to link health system capacity improvement and systems performance (outcomes)

Progression is measured on a **4-point** Likert scale: '1' = lowest level; '4' = highest level of progression.

The framework was piloted at the RRH in 2022 to obtain a baseline on the existing health capacities at the hospitals. A follow-on assessment was conducted in 2023 to measure if there were improvements in the health systems capacities.

Overall, significant improvements were observed across the six health system building blocks (see figure below)



#### RRH health system capacity for the decentralized HIV response by domain: 2022 vs 2023

RRH health system capacity for the decentralized HIV response by domain: 2022 vs 2023

The results represent a significant step towards enhancing the regional referral health systems and align with the commitment to improve decentralized

HIV and TB services in the quest to achieve the global target of ending AIDS by 2030.

The findings have been shared with all stakeholders to inform public health action and policy development.

# Welcoming new Implementing Mechanisms (IMs)



Jennifer Balaba during the orientation workshop in Soroti

METS, the lead Strategic Information (SI) mechanism, in collaboration with CDC, organized an orientation workshop to support new implementing mechanisms as they transition to take on work load in the various regions in Uganda.

During the meeting, the new mechanisms were introduced to the national and PEPFAR reporting requirements, given insights into the electronic health information systems as well as guidance on the surveillance programs supported by METS. The new partners were able to develop action plans.

The new mechanisms are Trust AIC Foundation supporting Soroti Region, Reach Out Mbuya Community Health Initiatives in Kampala Region.

METS will continue supporting the new mechanisms to ensure compliance with national and PEPFAR requirements. Moving forward, orientation meetings for Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) and Baylor Uganda that will be taken on Masaka and Mubende Regions respectively. These two partners have got expanded mandates beyond the areas they were operating in.



# Unlocking Scientific Excellence Through Collaborative Learning

The METS program and CDC Uganda's Office of Science collaborated on a five-day writing workshop aimed at synthesizing program results and advancing the development of scientific papers for publication. The workshop served as both a training opportunity and a platform to establish a core writing team and outline clear milestones toward publication. Key focus areas included reporting methods, analytic approaches, manuscript writing best practices, and regulatory protocols. Moving forward, the plan involves sustaining momentum by engaging program teams, utilizing regular touch-base sessions with CDC Office of Science and Subject Matter Experts to ensure quality and coherence in scientific content. The workshop, held at Kabira Country Club in Kampala, is documented through pictorial highlights showcasing key moments and activities.



Kenneth Mwambi (CDC) discussing responsible conduct in research and CDC clearance protocols



Dr. Julius Ssempiira (CDC) discussing program data analysis approaches



Brainstorming on team composition

# Enhancing Client-Centered Care through use of Innovative Tools



Julius Sendiwala facilitating a session on the audit tool during the Training of Trainers at Kabira Country Club on 28/11/23

In a concerted effort to revolutionize client centered care, the Ministry of Health (MoH), working closely with MakSPH-METS and USAID – Uganda Health Activity (UHA), introduced an audit tool, embedded within the national quality improvement collaboratives. The client audit tool serves as a comprehensive guide for facility teams, coaches, and mentors, enabling them to monitor and tailor individualized client care. Through this innovative tool, health workers identify services required for each client and ensure these

services are provided, triggering Quality Improvement (QI) processes if any aspect of care is missed. Initially a standalone MS Excel form, this tool has now seamlessly been integrated into the UgandaEMR, marking a pivotal advancement in healthcare tracking and efficiency. Optimum utilization of the audit tool can only be achieved with a fully functional and updated EMR.

A one-day national Training of Trainers (ToT) was organized to orient regional technical officers

and district QI focal persons with the EMR-generated audit tool. This training aimed to not only enhance client-centered care but also empower regional teams as Trainers for the widespread implementation of this tool. Additionally, the session provided a platform to share feedback continuous tool improvement, alongside outlining a strategic roadmap for its deployment across diverse regions.

Dr. Cordelia Katureebe, the National Coordinator for HIV Care



and Treatment, commended the collaborative efforts and urged participants to share stories illustrating how the audit tool has empowered frontline workers in delivering high-quality services to patients. Emphasizing the need for widespread utilization of the tool, she highlighted its role in providing vital data to MoH for monitoring service provision.

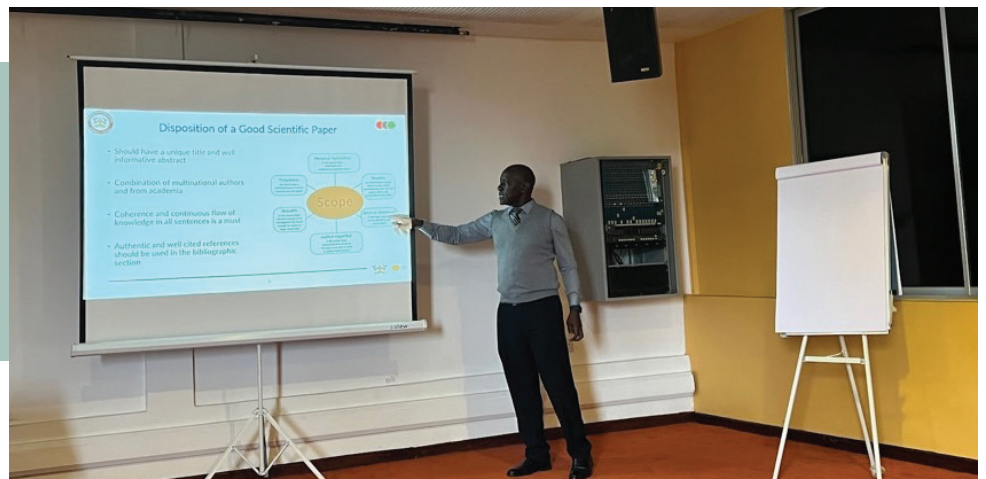
Moving forward, MoH will spearhead technical guidance, oversee coordination, and ensure effective roll-out and implementation. Development partners

will continue offering technical support, updating the tool, and training materials, and facilitating cross-regional learning, while comprehensive Implementing Partner mechanisms will lead roll-out of the audit tool and support health facility teams use the tools for client centered care. The intensive roll-out phase is planned for December 2023 to January 2024. This collaborative effort is expected to enhance healthcare services, foster best practices, and drive continued improvement in patient care.

## Gallery



Dr. Simon Muhumuza sharing tips for publication during the writing workshop held at Kabira Country Club Kampala on 20-24 November 2023.



### The Union World Conference on Lung Health 2023

This conference was held in Paris, France on November 15th-18th, 2023 with the theme "Transforming Evidence into Practice." Dr. Flavia Nakanwagi represented METS at an oral presentation on "Improving TB/HIV clinical care outcomes through a National TB Quality Improvement Collaborative in Uganda, October 2021-December 2022".

On her experience, Dr. Flavia noted that this year's conference was nothing short of inspiring, marked by groundbreaking scientific breakthroughs and boosted of eye-opening insights. "Each session has contributed to the rich tapestry of knowledge that promises to shape the trajectory of lung health and TB eradication", she added.





Dr. Alice Namale, Director METS (6th Left) attended the “Leveraging the HIV platform for Hypertension control in Uganda” workshop held at Golden Tulip Hotel on 28/11/2023.



The Ministry of Health launched the National Global Alliance campaign aimed at eliminating AIDS in children by 2030. The campaign leverages on PEPFAR AP3 drive which aims at improving treatment outcomes among children living with HIV, eliminating mother to child HIV transmission, and expanding MCH/ PMTCT services to lower health facilities. Julius Sendiwalu, a Technical Advisor M&E (C-light blue shirt), as a member of the Technical Working Group for the National Global Alliance/AP3, provided technical support to the ministry to ensure a successful launch.



## South African Health Informatics Association Conference 2023

Dr. Alice Namale and Jonathan Mpango attending the 2023 HELINA Conference in Cape Town that attracted over 130 delegates from Africa, Asia, Europe and America. The conference, which was hosted by the South African Health Informatics Association under the theme “Effective Implementation, Meaningful Use and Sustainability of Digital Health Interventions: The Role of Health Informatics and Imaging Informatics in Africa”, provided a platform for participants to share formal research results, use cases, knowledge, practice in the area of health informatics in Africa.





## The 1<sup>st</sup> Digital Health Conference 2023



Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng visiting the METS stall manned by Jaba Jeremiah (L) and Musa Mwanje (blue polo shirt) at the first Digital conference held in November 2023



METS was part of the organising committee for the first ever National Digital Health Conference under the theme "Leveraging digital health to improve efficiency in service delivery". The conference held on 13th - 14th November 2023, brought together thought leaders, policymakers, researchers, innovators, practitioners, digital health vendors and funders to discuss Uganda's progress in implementing digital health initiatives and how the country could tap into opportunities presented by digital health. Successes, challenges,

and lessons learnt in implementing the digital initiatives from Uganda's perspective were shared to benefit stakeholders. The conference featured keynote presentations, panel discussions, poster presentations, demonstration booths, and networking opportunities. Our Director, Dr. Alice Namale made the Partner remarks and pointed out that the conference had opened a new chapter to consolidate collective efforts to leverage digital health to improve efficiency in health service delivery with the aim of achieving digital transformation.

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