

# Describing impact: The Research Impact Framework

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# Study aims

- To describe the impact of maternal and newborn health grants funded by BMGF
- To explore the link between dissemination activities and impact.



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# The RIF





- Kuruvilla *et al.* Describing the impact of health research: a Research Impact Framework *BMC Health Services Research* 2006; **6**:134:1-18
- Framework used by researchers to reflect on impacts of their work
- Four impact categories: research-related, policy, service, societal



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# Research Impact Framework

Research-related impacts 	Policy impacts 	Service impacts 	Societal impacts 
Type of problem/knowledge	Level of policy-making	Type of services: health/intersectoral	Knowledge, attitudes and behaviour
Research methods	Type of policy	Evidence-based practice	Health literacy
Publications and papers	Nature of policy impact	Quality of care	Health status
Products, patents and translatability potential	Policy networks	information systems	Equity and human rights
Research networks	Political capital	Services management	Macroeconomic/related to the economy
leadership and awards		Cost-containment and cost-effectiveness	Social capital and empowerment
Research management			Culture and art
Communication			Sustainable development outcomes

# What we did

- Interviewed key project staff as MNH grants neared completion
- Asked about dissemination activities and impacts
- Categorised impacts by RIF theme, adding layer describing mechanisms by which impact achieved
  - Adopted &/or adapted by others
  - Additional funding secured
  - Others adopt tools used in project implementation
  - Data used to inform policy and practice
  - Requests for advice, further research.
- Followed up 12 months later, and added more grants
- Produced a report for grantees and funder summarising dissemination and impact across three countries: Ethiopia, India, Nigeria.



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# Examples of impact



## Research impact

- Funding secured for scale-up of newborn sepsis management in Ethiopia



## Policy impact

- Use of antibiotics for newborn sepsis management included in government policy for Community Based Newborn Care, Ethiopia
- ICT innovations contributed to government's mHealth strategy in Uttar Pradesh



## Service impacts

- Training materials included in national training manual for Health Extension Workers



## Societal impacts

- Community champions in NE Nigeria promoted MNH messaging.

# Use and limitations of the RIF

How did the RIF help?

- ✓ Standardised way of categorising impacts
- ✓ 'Light touch' – not onerous

Limitations

- ✗ Anecdotal, would benefit from triangulation, verification
- ✗ Not always obvious which category an impact fitted into
- ✗ Difficult to relate dissemination activities to impact
- ✗ Who to talk to? Grantees easy to access, but more convincing if impact reported by others

Potential

- Case studies of what leads to impact
- Link to work on scale-up.



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