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Maternal and Child
Survival Program

Gender Assessment for Midwifery and Medical Laboratory Technician Pre- Service Education Programs in Liberia



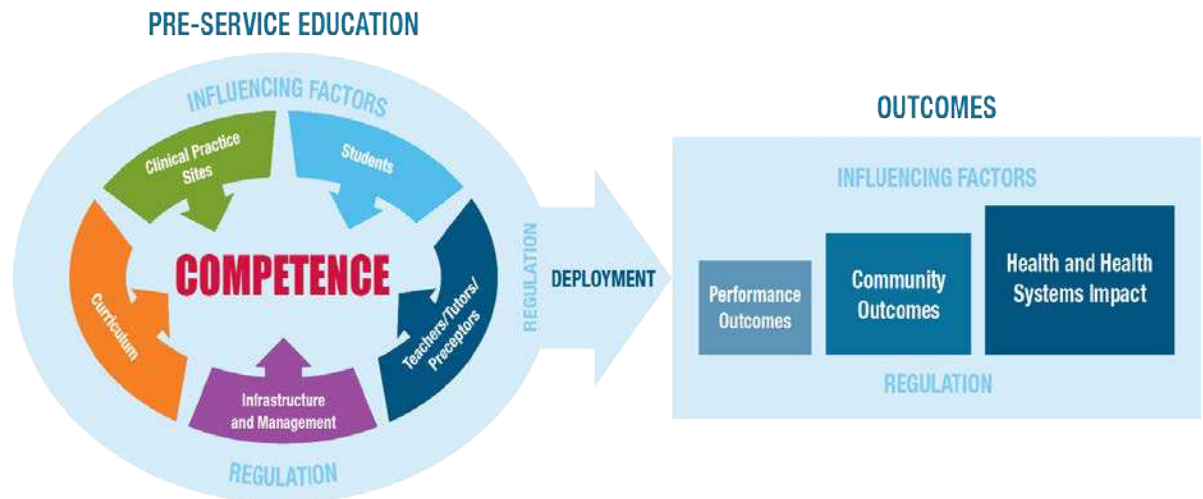
Nov 2017

Presentation Objectives

- To share the process of conducting the Gender Assessment
- Discuss key findings and recommendations
- Describe next steps for the Maternal Child Survival Program (MCSP)

MCSP Human Resource for Health Technical Approach in line with Government of Liberia Health Workforce Program

- Clinical sites
- Students
- Faculty
- Curriculum
- Management



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Background

- Gender disparities in Liberia Health Workforce (NCHW, 2010)
 - Overall, 62% of HWs are males
 - Clinical cadres ratio is -50/50
 - 80% of non-clinical cadres are males
- This study investigated gender biases that may affect students' experiences and performance
- The study aimed to strengthen the gender-responsiveness of pedagogy, curricula, and institutional structures

Study Objectives

Main Objectives of the study were to:

- ❖ Improve matriculation rates*
- ❖ Reduce drop-out*
- ❖ Enhance academic performance among students in pre-service training programs for midwives and medical laboratory technicians (MLT)*

Ethical Considerations

- University of Liberia –Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved
- Study aim, objectives and procedures explain to each participant
- Voluntary participation and withdrawal at any point allowed
- Informed consent were signed and collected before Focus Group Discussion /Key Informant Interviews
- Privacy respected at all time

Methodology

Sample:

- 4 schools (2 rural/2 urban)
- 3 midwifery program; 2 Medical Laboratory Technicians programs

Study Design

- Qualitative study
 - Key informant interviews (KIIs)
 - Case Study Discussion (CSDs)



Methodology

Key Informant Interview

Key informant interviews – matriculation, dropout, and academic performance, health and safety systems

21 staff

- 13 Teachers
- 5 Administrators
- 3 School clinic staff

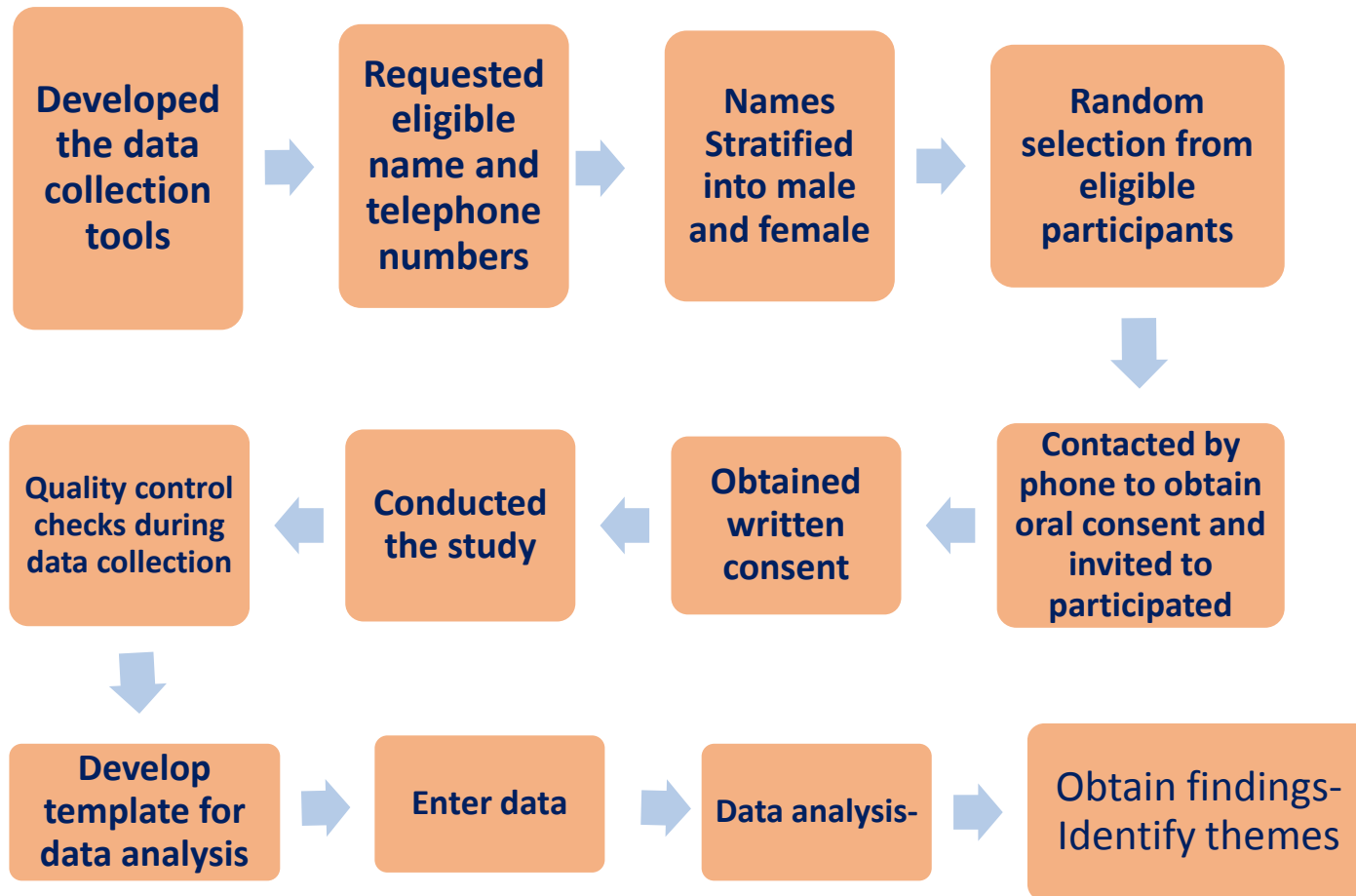
Focus Group Discussion

Student opinions on hypothetical case studies related to gender issues

128 Students

- 2 Case studies per program
- Maximum of 30 students
- 6 groups of same sex

Methodology for Conducting the Gender Analysis



Findings

- **Limited access to training on gender for school staff and students**
- ***Gender and Enrollment:***
 - More male Laboratory school program; More female Midwifery school Program
- **Lack of adequate Safety and Security for Female Students**
- **School Policies do not adequately address gender**

Findings Cont.

- **Gender issues that impact male students**

- *Obligations to support their families, obligations to support two wives, male dependence on female students to cook their meals, male midwifery student discomfort with discussing female reproductive organs, and in some cases, a belief that male midwifery students have a low IQ.*

- **Access to Feminine Hygiene and Family Planning Services**

- *Female students reported a need for access to family planning services and feminine hygiene products, but schools do not provide access to feminine hygiene or family planning services or products on campuses.*

- **Absenteeism / Dropout related to**

- *Key informants reported that female students may be absent from class due to a "don't care attitude," child care obligations, or the need to go home to cook for family members.*

- **Pregnancy and Dropout**

- **Limited Awareness of Sexual Harassment on Campus**

Recommendations

- Hold a dissemination meeting to share findings
- Build awareness about gender at all levels:
 - Strengthen school policies to address gender issues
 - Provide training on gender at schools
- Improve school data systems to ensure that data include issues on gender
 - *Assist schools to set up safe, confidential and anonymous data collection systems, including an anonymous reporting system, which can collect data on gender-specific issues that impact student academic performance, absenteeism and dropout*
 - *Provide schools with the tools necessary to analyze that data, for example, by holding a data analysis workshop and providing on-site supportive supervision in data analysis*

Immediate Action Plan

Focus on Two Areas

- Promoting gender-sensitive school environment
- Building the capacity of students to promote gender equality and Sexual Gender Based Violence
 - Meeting with Liberia Board of Nursing and Midwifery, Liberia Association of Medical Laboratory Technicians, Training Institutions, Ministry of Health and other stakeholders to develop gender policy and standards for integration and implementation by schools
 - Meet with schools to development and implement plan to address newly developed policies and standards
 - Conduct Gender Effective Teaching Skills technical update

Conclusions

- Conducting a gender assessment is an evidence based process to initiate the integration of gender into pre-service education and other areas
- Exploration of gender issues in pre-service institutions provides insight into critical issues affecting student performance and retention.
- Findings can be used to shape gender-responsive policy and gender-sensitive environments and ultimately strengthen the health workforce in Liberia and throughout the region.

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