

Key messaging on the coaching, mentoring and facilitation approach for Health Systems Strengthening

The Challenge

Achieving better health outcomes for populations in sub Saharan Africa requires strong, self-sustaining and adaptive systems. However, to achieve this goal, health practitioners in health systems strengthening have expressed need for support to navigate context-driven processes marred by political economy, institutional and economic complexities. Practitioners have shared their need for technical assistance that is more responsive to their needs for better access to experts who understand country contexts in addition to having relatable experiences to help them navigate through their implementation challenges. In addition, health practitioners want to see more investments in developing individual and institutional capacities for co-creating solutions that help them adapt to complex situations to contribute to lasting systems change for advancing universal health coverage. While each country's path toward UHC will be unique to its context, Health Experts will work alongside country policymakers and other teams in each country to provide such support to move countries toward UHC.

Why the FORCE, ACS/HSSA/SPARC Initiatives convened June 2018

SPARC and ACS and now the HSS Accelerator, are testing a different approach to technical assistance that draws mainly on local and regional experts to provide **coaching, mentoring and facilitation support** to country partners as they resolve their health systems challenges. The initiatives are committed to applying the approach through a cadre of experts who have technical skills and knowledge and **non-technical competences and soft skills to coach, mentor and facilitate country-led processes**. To inform the development of the approach, the initiatives convened a group of African experts, to **provide inputs to the design of the approach** at its nascent stage.

How the FORCE plans to contribute to developing the Approach

The initiatives encourage FORCE members to i) **Participate** in developing the approach with ACS/HSSA/SPARC¹, ii) **Test** this approach in country engagements and **share** the experience with the members of the Community, and ii) **Contribute** to the body of **knowledge** in this area.

The relationship of the FORCE and the Initiatives

The initiatives engage with the FORCE as a **group** as a 'think-tank' or **thought partner** to co-develop the Approach. In addition, the initiatives will continue to engage **individual** FORCE members as **coaches, mentors and facilitators** - as long as they meet requirements for the initiatives' country engagement work. The initiatives envisage that the FORCE will be the go-to resource to source coaches, mentors and facilitators beyond the life of the projects (ACS and HSSA).

The FORCE is a community which fosters personal interaction, experience sharing, curating and packaging knowledge. The FORCE provides a platform for an expert to enhance their coaching, mentoring and facilitation skills while the database can enhance the visibility of such an expert and even the community, he/she belongs.

¹The initiatives will lead development of the foundational tools and products needed to support this approach (e.g., orientation modules, database), but invite input from this group

Pathway to Sustainability

It is envisioned that through the FORCE the value of the coaching, mentoring and facilitation approach will be recognized and increase demand by countries and development partners. This should in turn increase the credibility of the FORCE as a go-to resource for experts with coaching, mentoring and facilitation skills. It should also increase the FORCE' credibility as a recognized and respected community responsible for the continuous development of the Community of Practice and body of knowledge for health financing technical experts in Africa.

With this credibility and high demand, the FORCE may consider evolving into a more formal institution and become a more strengthened community of experts.