



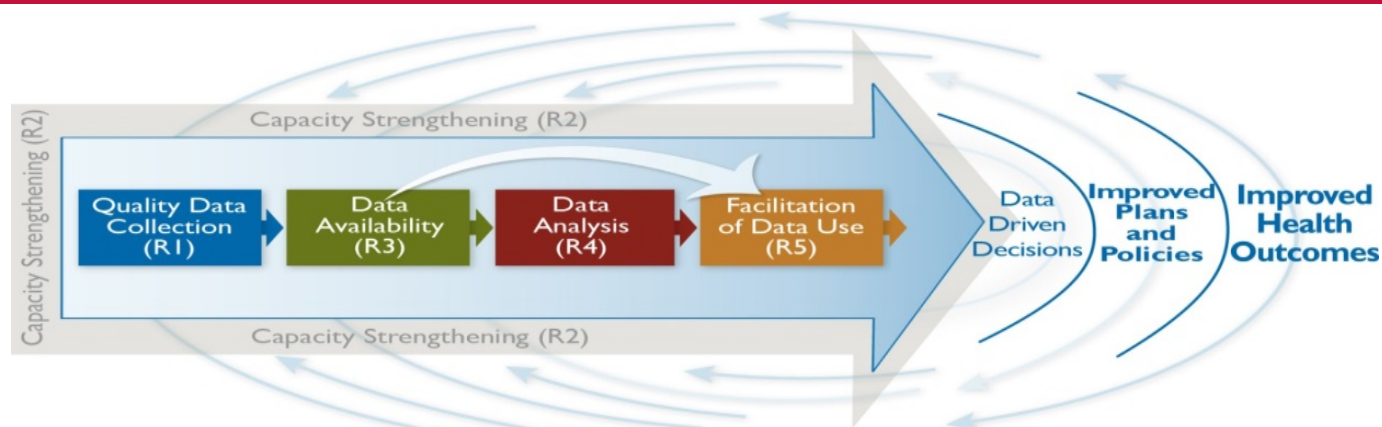
USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Strengthening the Demographic Data Base in the Post-2015 Era: *Lessons from The DHS Program*



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ICF International*

What is The DHS Program?



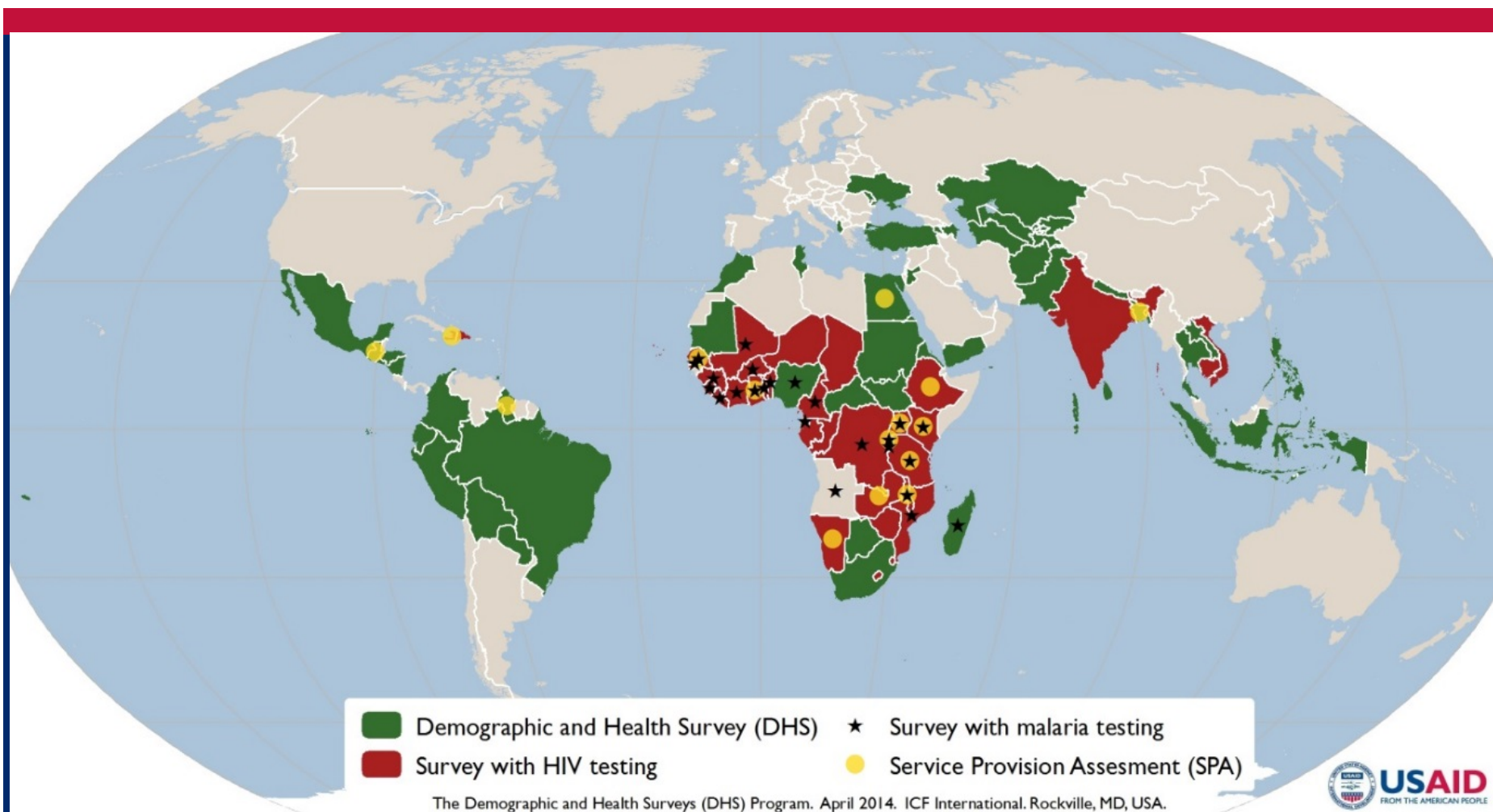
A **30+ year** USAID-funded project that provides technical assistance to developing countries to

- **improve the collection, analysis and presentation of population, health, and nutrition data**
- and**
- **facilitate use of these data for planning, policy-making, and program management**

The DHS Program Briefly

- Household-level data collection
- Standardized questionnaires, methodology and protocols: adapted to specific country needs
- Meet national and international needs
- Information on the *household*, all *household members*, *women age 15-49*, *children under five*; *men 15-54/59/64*
- *Electronic/most appropriate data collection tools*
- Transparent and well documented
- Methodologies/data shared
- *We usually work with NSOs and/or MOH*

Since 1984: 320+ Surveys in 90 countries



11,330,872: *Biomarker and other tests*

71,555: *Clusters with GPS data*

Technology along the entire survey spectrum

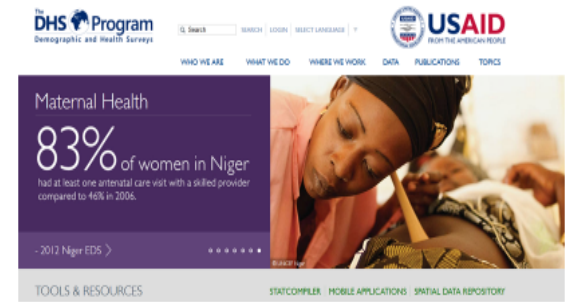
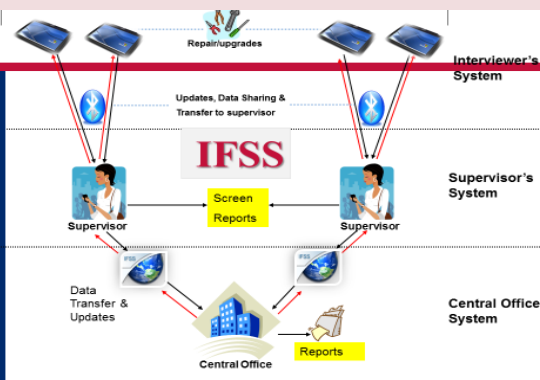
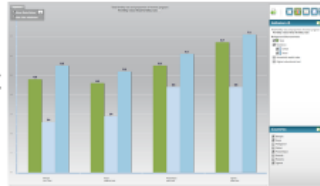
DHS increasingly conducted on tablets

Electronic Tools for Dissemination

The DHS mobile app: put DHS data at your fingertips!



Make your own charts, graphs, and data tables at STATcompiler.com



All publications, data, and interactive tools are available FREE at: www.dhsprogram.com



The DHS Blog: Blog.dhsprogram.com

A behind-the-scenes look at the work at DHS, new activities, staff, and fun commentary



Why The DHS in the Post-2015 Era?

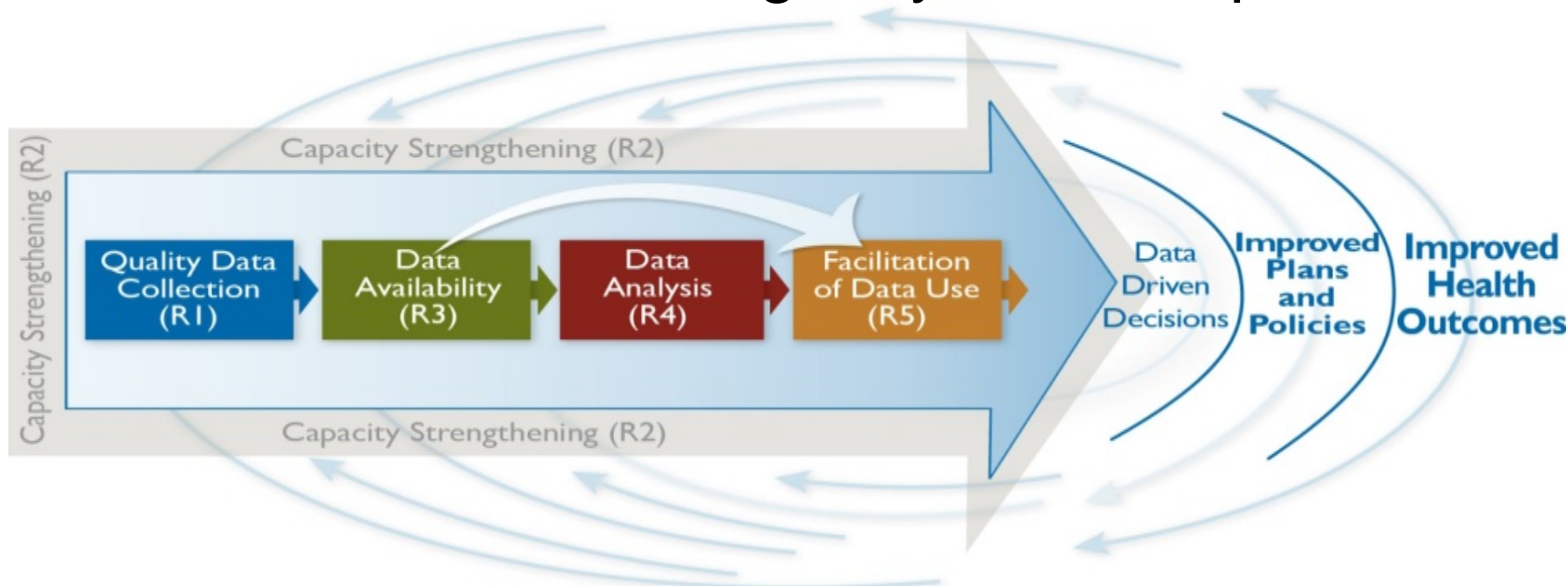
- **Reliability of data:** Quality assurance along the entire survey activity spectrum from sampling to analysis
- **Comparability of indicators** over time and across countries through standardization
- **Versatility and flexibility:**
 - Adaptable: Can include anything that you can ask individuals
 - Equitable: Covers everyone who lives in any kind of household
 - Because we visit households can determine living standards through observation: *Slum data collected that way*
 - Can include biomarkers
- **Richness and depth of data:** Provide outcome and impact indicators; but also data to disaggregate them by
- **Cost-effectiveness**
- **Availability and accessibility of data:** ***1,549,067 data sets downloaded since 2000***

Other Important Aspects

- **Sets standards** for every aspect of survey implementation, data sharing, and data use
- Continued adoption of **appropriate technologies**
- **Ethical data collection, storage and distribution:** Confidentiality of respondents paramount
- A constant focus on **data quality**
- Complete **transparency**

Lessons Learned

The foundation for strengthening the demographic data base has to be in the form of a package with data collection being only one component:



**Must include Data Availability,
Dissemination and Use/Analysis**

Lessons Learned



*Not all data
are equal*

Data documentation essential: Questionnaires, sampling, who were the enumerators, response rates, training, data cleaning, etc.

Invest in ensuring data made available in a standardized, usable way

Lessons Learned

Need to resolve the tension between country ownership and international needs

- Countries may not necessarily care about ‘standardization’ or transparency
- Politics vs. “truth”
 - Need a neutral arbiter
- Often against data sharing
- Data collection linked to funding cycle

Challenges: Survey Elasticity?

- Household surveys have been essential to tracking MDGs– DHS provided 21 of 23 MDG indicators
 - DHS be able to provide one or more indicators for virtually every household based SDG
- DHS is *not* infinitely elastic: Quality begins to suffer with length and complexity
 - Adding modules is adding length and/or complexity
- But do countries have the capacity for a huge number of surveys?



Challenges (contd.)

- One idea has been to build a question bank so that standardization can be maintained across surveys
 - Caution:*
 - *Different topics require different types of training, field staff —so you cannot always mix and match modules*
 - *How to monitor quality?*
- **Desire for more frequent data**
 - Need to consider
 - Feasibility and cost-effectiveness of more frequent data collection
 - Do implementing organizations have the capacity to handle so many surveys?
 - **Timely data vs. Frequent data:** Usefulness for indicators that only change slowly
 - Quality of data from yearly surveys

Desirable Post-2015 Data System

- Household surveys are key to monitoring SDGs and their equity aspects
- Surveys should be an integral part of a carefully designed and well functioning health statistics and information system that
- Donors must coordinate with countries to have long and short term strategic plan for household surveys
 - Which indicators when, at what level, in which survey and with what funding:
 - Must fund distribution and use of data
- Several different types of surveys will be needed:
 - Should we be looking beyond statistical offices?
 - For capacity building: going to universities to integrate courses and training at that level.



Thank You!