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## **Job Aids Technical Snapshots: Pearls of Wisdom**

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**Ed Kelley:** Each of you noted two pearls in your small groups, and we'd like to get one person from each group to say what those pearls are. The reason I'm asking for them is that we're recording these sessions again. One of the points that Tony made finishing up, is that a key element to the reason we convened this job aids seminar was the point about selling, and for us it's really pushing the job aids agenda forward.

We asked you to have a pearl and possibly a recommendation, and for time considerations, we may just want to say one recommendation. The facilitators were slotted in for this job but whoever happens to be available will be the person to say it. I'm going to start with the non-literate population group over here. Just remind people what your group was and what the recommendation is.

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### **“A picture is worth...”: Job aids for non-literate populations and Mobilizing Households: Job aids for improving care-taking/care-seeking**

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**Representative:** Our group discussed job aids for non-literate populations as well as mobilizing household job aids for improving care-taking and care-seeking. The pearl of wisdom was that since the PVO community has little experience with job aids, we recommend a library or database that could be accessed for information on different types of job aids available. There is different terminology people use for job aids, counseling cards, story cards, or some other kind of terminology. We would like to have some kind of a database or library or clearinghouse where this information is available.

Second is that since the PVO community has very little experience in using job aids as well as evaluating different types of job aids, we recommend that technical assistance should be provided for PVOs for developing and designing job aids as well as evaluating the impact of job aids.

**Ed Kelly:** Thanks very much. The next group is bridging communication gaps, the IPC group—who's still here from that?

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### **Bridging the communication gaps: Job aids to improve IPC**

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**Representative:** I don't know if this is a pearl of wisdom, but our consensus was that somehow counseling is different from a lot of the other tasks that we've been talking about. Whereas there are job aids for the content covered in counseling sessions, the actual counseling skills don't really seem to fit this model all that comfortably. I think we need to think about how job aids can work for counseling skills.

We all felt that job aids do have a real role. They should be institutionalized in any kind of interpersonal counseling, communication counseling training, and be incorporated into the training so that you're sending the trainees home with the job aids, whether they're reminders or self-assessment. They should be incorporated into the training course as written materials, and trainees should know how to use them so that they don't go home cold turkey.

**Ed Kelly:** Thanks. The next group, health worker performance?

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### **Improving health worker performance: Job aids to improve clinical services**

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**Representative:** Well, we were lucky, we had a very big group with a lot of experience in health worker performance and job aids. Our pearl of wisdom is that job aids require a lot of credibility, political support and leadership. There was a suggestion that you should draw in your social leaders and get their buy-in

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so that they can disseminate it to their peers as well. Then just some simple good luck and timing in terms of political priorities and people working with you to support the job aid.

In terms of recommendations, they should be as simple as possible and that they should indicate clear actions as well.

**Ed Kelly:** Thanks, excellent point as well, particularly it touches on Tony's selling point that you have to happen into a cycle of political commitment to these kind of things. The next group, sustaining improved performance, which I think is all the way up here on scaling up job aids efforts.

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### **Sustaining improved performance: Scaling up job aids efforts**

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**Representative:** We talked a lot about the really wonderful example from the Dominican Republic of a massive scale-up effort that now is replicated in part in Guatemala. We came up with two major pearls. One was the importance of planning for scale-up from the get-go. That means thinking about how you would do this, what kind of networking, cooperation you'd need, what kind of budgeting would be required to do a real scale-up and even some homework as to what it would cost, and getting the buy-in that you need, both from governments and from NGOs, PVOs.

Secondly we had a long discussion about quality versus quantity. Is a job aid better than no job aid? We talked about that a lot and couldn't really resolve it. Our pearl is that there are quality and quantity trade-offs and they need careful attention, consideration, and research into how good a product you need to get the performance, as Tony would say.

**Ed Kelly:** That's an excellent point, Paula. This is something I noted earlier, the question of the measurement gap. We had some excellent examples in the morning session of measurement, both in the process end of things as well as in effectiveness, but we didn't really get to talk about what's the next step, our job as implementers. Are there still questions about the effectiveness of job aids? Do we need to answer more questions about the best way to develop them? I think probably the answer is affirmative on both but that's something for future thought.

The next session was supervision and management, the forgotten in the hallway work task.

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### **The forgotten work task: Job aids to improve supervision and management**

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**Representative:** Discussions have gone through a couple of themes and I think the group would like to add onto them. As a pearl of wisdom, I think a common theme that came up throughout the discussions is the clarity about the role of the provider being supervised. If we don't have a very clear role, any checklist or job aid for a supervisor would be very difficult to accomplish. I think we need clarity about the task of the provider before thinking of a clear job aid.

In terms of a recommendation, something that came up several times in our discussions is the importance of the use of the job aid for supervisors to provide feedback to the lower levels. We talked in detail about the uses of job aids in supervision at the different levels of the system. Whatever form it may take, I think it is vital that these job aids or checklists do provide feedback to the lower levels, always with a focus on one-to-one dialogue and using the supervision system as an on-job training and opportunity for training. I don't know if anybody from the group would like to add to that.

**Ed Kelly:** Okay, thank you. Finally the group in the back, the new technology group, do you guys want to comment?

## **New technology: Electronic Job aids**

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**Representative:** We looked at the new technology and reviewed a couple of CD/Internet type job aids and basically came up with two pearls. The first was that the Internet/CD format really provides low cost and a lot of flexibility in terms of being able to adapt materials for local settings. You can systematize your information content and then use that medium as a mechanism to be able to easily change it or adapt it to the need at a local level.

Another conclusion we reached was that perhaps the job aids we were talking about, by the definition we had this morning, might fall more into the category of a learning tool in that their end use is not specifically by the health worker themselves. Instead, it is aimed more at the program manager or project level. We're not really getting down to the end user at the health level with this new technology yet.

**Ed Kelly:** There was a joke my old girlfriend's dad who worked at IBM used to tell. There were two guys sitting around the latest computer, a huge, gigantic computer that they'd worked on. They ran through this very, extremely complex calculation that they needed to do, and the senior one turned to the young one and said, "Do you realize that it would have taken 400 men 250 years to make a mistake as big as we just made?"

Just a couple of final thoughts and I'll let John and Bart say good-bye for all of us. There is a book out there by a woman named Courtney Rosen who is founder and CEO of E-How, which is called, *How To Do Everything*. It's literally 1,000 pages of job aids, everything from boiling an egg to changing your oil. That's a word of caution to us, and Tony was really good talking about this: job aids are not a magic bullet, there is a whole set of supporting factors that go with them. Job aids are designed to solve a particular set of issues out there that we face quite frequently and we wish that someone could come up with solutions. They're also something that we need to understand a little bit better, and we hope that today helped us.

I want to thank a few people, particularly John and Bart, as well as Jim Heiby for helping us put things together. Jenn Lahaie and Ebie Dupont really ran things and they're in the back there, so you can shake their hands on your way out as well as Edgar Gomez and QAP staff. Wendy, Paula, and Waverly helped us out a lot, as well as all our facilitators, Peggy, Karen, other people, and our note-takers, who came down here.

Finally, organizations. CORE and QAP were happy to host this. USAID is to be thanked for helping us put this together. Organizations that helped us a lot with content include PATH, Pop Council, CCP, CRS, JHPEIGO and others. Those are just a few who contributed some of their time as facilitators here.