

CASE STUDY 2

Lessons learned from situation analyses: the cases of Egypt, Malaysia, Pakistan and Rwanda

Background

These four NCD alliances conducted advocacy situation analyses to ground their advocacy strategies in evidence:

- **Egyptian NCD Alliance & NCD Malaysia:** To better understand the gaps and challenges of strengthening the NCD health workforce to progress towards UHC.
- **HeartFile/Pakistan NCD Alliance:** To assess the policy landscape of trans fats in the country, providing a base of evidence for their elimination.
- **Rwanda NCD Alliance:** To assess the NCDs and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) policy, programme, and political landscape in Rwanda.

Challenges in conducting and interpreting the results of their situation analyses:

- **COVID-19 pandemic:** The restrictions and health workforce demands imposed by COVID-19 presented challenges in conducting situation analyses. The alliances in Egypt and Malaysia dealt with the limited availability of physicians to participate in interviews and surveys, and other restrictions preventing them from doing in-person interviews and face-to-face focus groups.
- **Stakeholder lack of awareness:** Rwanda NCD Alliance faced difficulties in reaching and communicating with some stakeholders, not only due the pandemic, but also because of low levels of awareness about their own roles in the NCD programmes.
- **Lack of data:** HeartFile identified a lack of data on trans fats consumption, which later presented challenges in refining the findings of their situation analysis.

Lessons learned and experiences conducting situation analyses:

- **Situation analyses strengthen advocacy activities:** Alliances found that situation analyses enabled them to better plan and

implement advocacy activities, helping to determine priorities and serving as a source of evidence for campaign planning.

- **Conducting situation analyses can help build coalitions:** Situation analyses help establish consensus on specific advocacy issues, including on key data points and advocacy recommendations, as well as to map key stakeholders to identify allies within government, civil society, media and other health and development groups.

Recommendations for conducting successful situation analyses:

- **Engage a wide range of stakeholders to strengthen the outcomes of the situation analysis and the advocacy strategy:** Alliances in Egypt and Malaysia recommend seeking insights from healthcare workers at all levels to provide a comprehensive understanding of the entire landscape. The alliance in Rwanda recommends using a participatory approach to identify and involve key NCD stakeholders in advocacy planning, especially fellow CSOs and people living with NCDs.
- **Involve key decision-makers and advocates early on to build consensus:** HeartFile recommends involving key stakeholders within government and regulatory bodies before starting a situation analysis, ensuring support and future consensus of results.
- **Spend time locating the source of the problem to conduct a better, more precise analysis:** Make sure to identify where the source of the problem requiring a policy, legislative and/or regulatory change comes from, and exhaustively map out the precise policy domains and jurisdictions involved.
- **Guard against industry interference in data collection and agenda setting:** Always take steps to ensure unhealthy commodities industries cannot influence the analysis or the recommendations.
- **Make sure to share the results widely:** Validating and disseminating the results of a situation analysis is important to build strong foundations for any advocacy plan.