



Spotlight 1: Lessons from evaluating A360

Adolescents 360 (A360) is a four-year, \$30 million initiative (2016 - 2020) to increase adolescent girls' access to and demand for modern contraception in developing countries, beginning with Nigeria, Ethiopia and Tanzania. The project is implemented by a Population Services International (PSI)-led consortium, and co-funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation. Itad is working in collaboration with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Avenir Health to independently evaluate and distil lessons from A360. This brief draws out lessons from the Mid-Term Review, on evaluating a program developed through human-centered design.

The A360 approach has drawn on six disciplines to develop country-specific adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health solutions: human-centered design (HCD), public health, adolescent developmental neuroscience, socio-cultural anthropology, youth engagement and marketing. The HCD-led design process posed challenges to the evaluation in both design and implementation. Two years into the evaluation process, we reflect on the lessons learned, and issues for other evaluators, implementers and commissioners to consider:

- Think about the timing of study designs:** Key pieces of information about the intervention were unclear and changed during the period when the outcome evaluation and cost-effectiveness evaluation protocols were being developed. Evolutions occurred in the interventions themselves, the study populations and the timeline for implementation. This resulted in resources being expended on multiple study designs before the final intervention was known.
- Engage a flexible process evaluation team:** A project like A360 is fast paced and adjusts workplans frequently. This requires a flexible and resilient evaluation team, who can adapt and align closely with implementation workplans.
- Adapt to respond to the intervention:** When evaluating an iterative HCD process, an adaptive PE approach is required. In A360, the process evaluation paused after the pilot phase to revise the approach and evaluation questions, in order to respond to the needs of A360 and ensure the right questions were being asked as the solutions scaled.
- Mitigate limited documentation and fast pace with direct observation:** Direct observations through the process evaluation have been key to capturing the depth of the fast-paced, highly-iterative HCD process, which is often undocumented.
- Be aware of the potential for research fatigue during the design phase:** Evaluators need to balance the importance of capturing the views of community members with the potential for research fatigue through participation in both the HCD process and evaluation.
- Adapt to the needs of implementers to help evaluation findings feed into implementation:** Due to the intense pace of A360 and high levels of demand on country teams, there was initially limited scope for implementers to consider and apply process evaluation findings. In 2018, the process evaluation introduced 'sounding workshops' (facilitated workshops with implementation teams to engage with evaluation findings shortly after analysis was

completed) and Participatory Action Research (PAR) case studies (rapid research focused on country teams' 'burning questions' in order to generate evidence that could be directly fed into implementation) alongside its existing activities.

Future HCD-based initiatives may wish to consider a **phased evaluation approach**:

1. Lead with a process evaluation, with predefined feedback loops, aligned to key decision moments for the program.
2. Wait until the intervention's details are finalized (e.g. following the pilot phase) before designing outcome evaluation and cost effectiveness components

However, the advantages of a phased approach need to be balanced against the disadvantages of delaying the outcome evaluation baseline.

Read more from the Mid-Term Review:

[Spotlight 2](#): The A360 experience of HCD

[Spotlight 3](#): Meaningful youth engagement in A360

[Spotlight 4](#): Service providers— the battle to serve

Find the full Mid-Term Review [here](#) and a short visual summary [here](#).