

Title	Development of district/county level learning sites for the investigation of planning, management and accountability mechanisms
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Background

In Kenya, major re-organisation of the health system based on principles of decentralisation, community participation and intersectoral collaboration began in the mid 1980s when District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) were established. It continues today, promoted through the community strategy and the Health Sector Services Fund (HSSF), and has been re-emphasised in 2013 with the devolution of government functions from national level to 'semi autonomous' counties countrywide. These governance and community accountability changes have enormous implications for health system performance at county and health facility level, including through impacting on processes of priority setting, resource allocation, budgeting and financial management and human resource management.

Challenges to conducting research on governance changes and their implications are the difficulty in knowing exactly what changes will happen where, and disentangling the impact of governance changes from other parallel changes in the health system. Key to research success is also the support and interest from the health managers and administrators at county level and below who have significant experience and "tacit knowledge" and who it is hoped would be key research users.

Purpose of the research

RESYST research will establish learning sites among current DHMTs in Mombasa, Kilifi and Malindi, to be absorbed into Mombasa and Kilifi counties, to explore accountability mechanisms impacting on district/county and facility health care managers, how these mechanisms interact with each other up and down the health system, and how they are changing over time.

In conducting the research, further research ideas, including action research activities through which managers and researchers will work together to address real problems, will be developed together with managers in the counties, for consideration in future independent proposals.

Study methods

The research will be primarily a qualitative descriptive study, including a range of qualitative methodologies (document review, individual and group interviews, critical reflection and case studies).

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