Presentation 1 – Overview of the study of conducive and limiting factors

# Methods

The study was a mixed methods multi-country case study of the West African sub-region. It focused predominantly but not exclusively on the 6 West African countries (Burkina Faso, Benin, Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana) of the Innovating for Maternal and Child Health in Africa (IMCHA) initiative. Data collection involved non-exhaustive review of grey and published literature, and 40 key informant (KI) interviews. Additionally, we validated the findings and conclusions at a West African Health Organization (WAHO) country meeting in Ghana in November 2015 and sub-regional meeting in Dakar in February 2016. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research and Development Division of the Ghana Health Service.

# Findings

There was a multiplicity of interventions being piloted, researched or implemented at scale for MNCH in the sub-region. They included audits, financing, task shifting and health promotion and prevention interventions among others. There were multiple interacting conducive and limiting factors to effective implementation to scale related to health systems and context. Several related to people as actors and stakeholders in various roles and their power (influence); were part of a cluster we classified as software. We also classified as software, factors related to values held within health systems and responsiveness. Factors related to classic WHO health systems building blocks of governance, medicines and technologies, human resources, services delivery, financing, and information systems also acted as conducive and limiting factors and we classified these as hardware. Context acted indirectly through its effect on hardware, software and values; and directly through the social determinants of health.

**Conclusions**

Efforts to accomplished the unfinished MDG 4 and 5 agenda in West Africa must recognize the futility of investing predominantly in interventions; and apply an integrated approach of simultaneously addressing conducive and limiting health system and contextual factors.