

WHO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY, PEOPLE-CENTRED AND RESILIENT HEALTH SERVICES

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### FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

#### Cape Town, South Africa, 22-24 March 2017

This report is the output of a 3-day technical workshop to examine the links between community engagement, quality, people-centred and resilient health services and communities. The workshop was convened by WHO through a collaboration between the Health Promotion and Social Determinants Unit (HPD) in the WHO Regional Office for Africa and the Service Delivery and Safety Department (SDS) at WHO headquarters.

# Acronyms and Abbreviations

	AFRO	WHO Regional Office for Africa
	CEQ	WHO community engagement framework for quality, integrated, people-centred and resilient health services
	CHW	community health workers
	СНР	community health programme
	CSDH	WHO Commission Report on Social Determinants of Health
	EVD	Ebola virus disease
	HPD	Health Promotion and Social Determinants Unit
	HIS	Health Systems and Innovation Cluster
	IHI	Institute for Healthcare Improvement
	IPCHS	WHO Framework for integrated people-centred health services
	мон	Ministry of Health
	NCD	noncommunicable diseases
	QA	quality assurance
	QI	quality improvement
	QHC	Universal Health Coverage and Quality Unit
	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
	SDS	Department of Service Delivery and Safety
	UHC	universal health coverage
	wно	World Health Organization

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Framework Development Workshop

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### Foreword

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The response to the Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak of 2014 provided an opportunity to learn what did and did not work in terms of community engagement. These important lessons have implications for strengthening health systems and communities. The message from Ebola was clear: transmission rapidly slowed and stopped when the health sector, response agencies and developmental partners learnt to work with (and not only for) local families and communities affected by Ebola.

As the Ebola outbreak evolved and communities in the three Ebola affected countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) resisted measures to prevent further transmission of infection, the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners took unprecedented actions, such as recruiting community engagement staff and positioning them at the district level, mobilizing WHO health promotion officers from neighbouring countries and deploying international experts from the social sciences. This was done to try and bridge the structural, technical and institutional barriers that were preventing the integration of local knowledge and culture into technical and operational decision-making and responses.

In the WHO African Region, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, the Regional Director, elevated and placed the Health Promotion and Social Determinants of Health (HPD) unit within the Office of the Director, Programme Management (DPMO) to coordinate the mainstreaming of health promotion and social determinants of health across all technical programmes, in order to effectively address universal health coverage (UHC). At the WHO Headquarters level, the Service Delivery and Safety (SDS) department, in the Health Systems and Innovation (HIS) cluster prioritized the integration of community engagement as a key action for resilient, people-centred health systems. Both these initiatives make an important, and often missing, connection between community, people-centred approaches and quality in UHC. Relationships built and maintained during the delivery of routine services and programmes are drawn upon during emergencies. There is an urgent need to institutionalize a better and more sustainable way of engaging with service users, their families and local communities so that significant and marginalized voices are solicited, heard and acted upon throughout the entire service and programme planning cycle.

This will require fundamental shifts in the way WHO and Members States understand and engage collaboratively with service users, their families and local communities. It will take a change in the mind-set, attitudes and practices of health professionals at all levels of the health system. The legacy of Ebola left little doubt for the global health community: it can no longer be "business as usual". Ebola laid down the gauntlet for the emergence of a self-learning, self-adaptive and self-leading workforce able to support and collaborate with communities as co-creators of health and well-being.



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### Preamble

#### Community engagement: a cornerstone of quality, safe and peoplecentered services

The 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa was the largest the world had ever known and it triggered the most protracted Ebola response in history. The experience brought home and reinforced that context and culture matter and clearly demonstrated the interdependent and reciprocal relationship between health service providers, responders and health service users, their families and communities.

The actions or lack of action of service providers and response teams had a deep impact on community understanding and reactions. In the midst of wide community distrust and sometimes outright rejection of outbreak control and prevention measures in Ebola-affected countries, WHO and partners, in an unprecedented move, began to substantially invest in ways that addressed the social and cultural dimensions of epidemic response in an attempt to close the "distrust gap" between EVD response teams and the surrounding communities.

These investments included: i) the recruitment and deployment of social scientists and WHO social mobilization staff, ensuring that they were embedded and/or worked closely with technical and operational response staff as well as supporting social mobilization partners at national, sub-national and district level; ii) applying transdisciplinary and interagency interventions to rebuild trust between service providers and communities; and iii) the integration of community engagement into relevant WHO technical guidelines and recommendations such as: safe and dignified burials<sup>1</sup>, implementation of community care centres<sup>2</sup>; and recruitment of people recovered from Ebola as potential donors for convalescent whole blood and plasma therapy<sup>3</sup>.

# AFRO regional priorities and actions to elevate health promotion and social determinants

The WHO regional office for Africa has been supporting its Member States to address social determinants of health and health equity since the launch of the WHO Commission Report on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) in 2008. The strategic priorities for this area of work have been further strengthened through decisions taken at global and high-level meetings namely, the World Conference on Social Determinants of Health (2011); the UN-High Level Meeting on NCDs (2011); and the 8th and 9th WHO Global Conference on Health Promotion (2013 and 2016).

Furthermore in Dr Moeti's WHO Africa Health Transformation Programme (2015) the Regional Director for

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