

NATIONAL QUALITY POLICY AND STRATEGY WHO MEETING REPORT

CO-DEFINING A PATHWAY FOR IMPACT

WHO Global Learning Laboratory for Quality UHC
14-16 June 2017
WHO headquarters, Geneva



World Health
Organization

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The WHO National Quality Policy and Strategy (NQPS) meeting was an important milestone in taking forward the quality agenda at the global, regional and national levels. Quality leaders from eight national ministries of health, four WHO regional offices and one WHO country office attended the meeting at WHO headquarters, to forge relationships, share knowledge on best practices for NQPS development and implementation, and provide guidance on how to strengthen the collective NQPS agenda. The meeting was strategically organized in a learning laboratory style, whereby participants shared experiences within a safe setting on past and current pathways to NQPS; discussed strategies for enhancing capacity; and together created a guided action plan for WHO technical cooperation moving forward. Key WHO staff were invited to provide technical briefings on specific topics prioritized by meeting participants, including people-centred health services; health workforce; maternal, newborn and child health; quality measurement; health governance and finance; community engagement; patient safety; infection prevention and control; water sanitation and hygiene (WASH); health security planning; and HIV treatment and care.

The meeting began with presentations from country participants on their experiences and lessons learned regarding NQPS. This set the scene for discussions on the current NQPS landscape, including challenges and further needs to strengthen NQPS efforts. WHO regional and country colleagues provided reflections on NQPS and identified key needs, including facilitating dialogue to ensure that resources are mobilized for capacity-building, so as to encourage an integrated approach to quality at the national level. Focusing on specific actions to improve NQPS technical capacity, a draft copy of the NQPS Handbook was shared with meeting participants and session discussions provided an opportunity to co-develop and refine the NQPS Handbook. There was clear validation from all participants of the importance and general structure of the NQPS Handbook as a resource for action. Focused discussions on tools and resources allowed prioritization of the technical resources required to support NQPS. A consensus was reached about using the WHO Global Learning Laboratory (GLL) for Quality Universal Health Coverage for enabling further knowledge exchange on the NQPS Handbook, other tools and resources, as well as simultaneously providing a platform for co-developing knowledge on NQPS.

A key moment in the meeting occurred on the final day of discussions, when each participant was asked to provide guidance on the most valuable role for WHO in supporting countries working on designing and implementing NQPS. It was agreed that mobilization towards NQPS needed to be catalyzed by WHO, given the unique role the Organization occupies in supporting ministries of health. However, participants highlighted that country-led approaches were critical to drive the process, to ensure national ownership and sustainability. The important role of a range of technical partners was highlighted.

This was the first Learning Laboratory meeting on NQPS. The openness with which meeting participants shared their experiences and expressed humility regarding the challenges on contextual NQPS efforts was remarkable. Participants were fully engaged, expressing commitment for the key principles recognized as essential to facilitate next steps in the global, regional and national work on NQPS. This included the need to create a path forward, together, to strengthen national policy development alongside strategy implementation for quality. Despite recognition of the challenges being faced in moving forward with NQPS from the national to community level, there was group consensus that this global dialogue provided a valuable and critical opportunity to co-create a coalition around the subject. Prioritizing quality in the national dialogue on health service delivery and using NQPS as a specific way of achieving quality universal health coverage was highlighted as critical.



“There is power in unity” - Andrew Likaka

Left to right. Standing: Dr Germán Escobar Morales, Dr Lopa Basu, Dr Niño Dal Dayanghirang, Mr Benjamin Nyakutsey, Ms Lauren Hoisl, Ms Nana Mensah-Abrampah, Mr Philip Kerkula Bemah, Dr Mondher Letaief, Dr Shams Syed, Dr Daniel Gebremichael Burssa, Dr Sebastian Garcia Saisó, Professor Sheila Leatherman, Ms Melissa Bingham, Ms Zandile Zibwowa, Ms Heather Anne Harmon. Seated: Dr Hind Babekir Hassan Abdallatif, Dr Eka Viora, Dr Andrew Likaka, Dr Ed Kelley, Dr Salma Burton, Dr Matthew Neilson, Dr Jonas Gonseth-Garcia.

BACKGROUND

Quality of health services is critical to achieving universal health coverage (UHC) and meeting the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The success and value of UHC depends on its ability to provide quality services to all people, everywhere. Furthermore, resilient health services require quality as a foundation for effective service delivery. There is an urgent need to place quality at the centre of country, regional and global action, in order to progress towards UHC.

Efforts to improve quality of care and institutionalize a culture of quality across a health system need to be supported by strong national quality policy and strategy (NQPS), developed by countries to address quality in their specific context, while remaining linked to wider national health policy and planning.

Informed by the Framework on Integrated People-Centred Health Services, and working closely with colleagues across WHO and Member States, the WHO Department of Service Delivery and Safety (SDS) is working with countries to institutionalize quality and catalyse global learning and action. SDS is working to co-develop approaches and tools for NQPS grounded in country experience, which may be used by all countries moving forward.

In an effort to respond to country-level needs, an NQPS Handbook has been jointly developed to outline the rationale for developing national quality policy and strategy and to propose an approach to achieving this. This resource supports the process of developing a national quality policy and strategy.

The NQPS Handbook, currently in draft form, outlines a process of implementation-based policy-making, promoting the value of informing the policy and strategy process with real experience on how such initiatives are put into action within countries. In this spirit, it is important that this document itself is grounded in the reality of the policy and strategy-making environment in which countries are operating. A number of countries have recently begun the process of reviewing, developing and implementing national quality policies and strategies, which has generated a body of experience on how best to approach this challenging but important work. Technical partners have

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