World Health Organization

Human Resources for Health leadership and management: a prototype curricula package

Prototype curriculum for a one-month course

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Abbreviations

CU	curricular unit
GSHRH 2030	WHO Global strategy on human resources for health: Workforce 2030
HLM	health labour market
HRH	human resources for health
HRIS	human resources information systems
HWF	health workforce
NHWA	national health workforce accounts
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UHC	universal health coverage
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

While the master's course develops in-depth technical and professional skills across all aspects of human resources for health (HRH) leadership and management, this one-month course will enable participants to develop the skills and competencies to perform priority tasks related to HRH. These include analysis, planning and management, with a particular emphasis on facilitating participatory leadership, policy dialogue, negotiation and consensus-building. The course will cover different stakeholders, inside and outside of the health sector, and the interplay towards sustainable health workforce (HWF) strategies.

The conceptualization of this course is informed by the notion of participatory leadership,[1,2] as well as that of strategic and distributed leadership.[a]

Rationale

Health workers are at the core of health systems. Shortages of health staff, their often inequitable geographical distribution, and gaps in their capacity and performance were key obstacles to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.[3] Managing these issues requires multisectoral coordination and collaboration[4] and investment in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Supporting and enabling an effective HWF to provide quality service delivery is multifaceted.[5] Challenges are diverse, including how to ensure decent work conditions, improve geographical distribution of health workers to facilitate access, and address the implications of migration of health workers to the private sector and other countries. The multiple stakeholders involved in HRH planning, management, governance and leadership contribute to the complexity underlying these problems. Adequate HRH policy formulation and implementation requires good governance, effective management strategies, and effective communication among stakeholders to allow equitable participation in HRH governance through collective decision-making processes.[6,7]

Successful HRH leadership and policy dialogue help to overcome conflict-ridden situations and advance towards evidence-informed policy decisions.[8] Among others, policy dialogue goals include informing or testing policies and assessing policy options. Thus, policy dialogue becomes an integrated part of the leadership and policy-making process, rather than just a tool to ensure inclusive and comprehensive policy briefs. Without effective leadership and policy dialogue, health policies and plans are less likely to succeed.[9]

In addition to core HRH analysis and policy development skills, this course therefore emphasizes and progressively builds cross-cutting skills in participatory policy dialogue, negotiation and consensus-building.

a Distributed leadership is provided throughout the system, and participatory leadership implies that all stakeholders within the system contribute to overall leadership. As such, leadership in complex and rapidly-changing contexts needs to be "alert, agile, adaptive, action- and outcomes-oriented and accountable to all stakeholders".

Study cycles

The course may be offered as:

- a one-month stand-alone course; or
- incorporated as a module within a higher education programme such as a master's of Public Health or master's in Management of Health Services.

The course duration will be around 160 hours of study. Depending on the educational institution norms and preferences, the course may be presented in other ways, for instance one week per month for four months or self-paced learning.

Target audience

The course targets a mix of audiences potentially engaged with advocacy and policy dialogue around HWF issues, namely:

- Senior technical, policy-making and managerial staff in national and provincial/state/regional ministries of health or other areas, who are involved in strategic decision-making, and/or policy development, planning and implementation, either for general HRH development or for specialized areas such as information systems, training, workforce planning and projections, and financing.
- Middle-level managers and technical staff at provincial and local levels, responsible for HWF deployment, performance, data management and analysis, policy implementation, capacity development, etc.
- Leaders of professional associations, regulatory councils, technical staff of international agencies and nongovernmental organizations, and journalists, involved in HRH policy matter.
- Other interested public health professionals who aspire to acquire additional competencies in HRH policy, leadership and management.

Approach to teaching and learning

The course proposes integrated theory and practice in each unit so that participants work on a sequence of structured activities. Structured activities include synchronous and asynchronous

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