

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

Prototype curriculum for an executive
short course



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

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Abbreviations

CU	curricular unit
HLM	health labour market
HRH	human resources for health
HWF	health workforce
NHWA	national health workforce accounts
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UHC	universal health coverage
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

While the year-long master's course and the one-month course develop in-depth technical and professional skills across all aspects of human resources for health (HRH) leadership and management, this short executive course concentrates on selected priority competencies required to steer and oversee strategic leadership and policy dialogue in the HRH field.

The conceptualization of this course is informed by the notion of participatory leadership,¹ as well as that of strategic and distributed leadership.^a The executive course will develop participants' attitudes, skills and competencies to provide leadership and stewardship in all dimensions of HRH policy and management.

This short course focuses on the stewardship role of senior leaders in HRH, aiming specifically to enhance strategic leadership, strengthen participants' capabilities to set the vision, strategies and policies to achieve universal health coverage (UHC). Participants will also be able to facilitate dialogue and consensus-building across multiple stakeholders, ensure good governance that supports the achievement of these goals, and contribute to improved HRH efficiency, effectiveness and performance in diverse health systems and health care settings.

Rationale

The increasing complexity of society, including health systems, requires a systemic thinking approach that takes into account connectedness, intricate dynamics and sometimes the fragility of health systems. Senior leaders are required to guide and direct innovation and capacity-building and strengthening that are responsive to societal and systems' needs. This requires awareness and understanding of health systems as interconnected adaptive entities, and the ability to adopt reflective practice and engage multiple stakeholders. This course develops participants' competencies and their knowledge, skills and attitudes to navigate the global and local policy environment for HRH. Participants will develop both the cognitive aspects of problem solving (causal reasoning, double- and triple-loop learning,^{2,3,4} logical frameworks, decision-trees, and information integration) and non-cognitive components (motivation, self-regulation, flexibility, adaptability, resilience and partnership building).

HRH strategic decisions result from continuous interaction of diverse actors with varied interests across multiple policy spaces.^{5,6,7} Strong strategic leadership and stewardship is imperative to generate the necessary political will and availability of resources to advance the HRH agenda. Given many, often conflicting interests, policy-making is not necessarily consensual. Sometimes negotiation is necessary and consensus-building is a process requiring strong leadership to create sustainable solutions. Leadership is necessary to initiate the process, engage and collaborate with key stakeholders, and encourage them to adopt a partnership approach.⁸

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 outcome-oriented, and accountable to all stakeholders".

General characterization of the executive short course

Study cycles

The course is offered in two parts: a mandatory one-week (40–45 hours) facilitated course – either face-to-face or on a virtual platform with interaction between presenters and participants; and an optional (recommended) additional week (40 hours) of self-study. The total course duration is 2 weeks 80–85 hours. Depending on the institutional rules of the course provider, a certificate of attendance can be offered for the completion of the first module, and a certificate of completion at the end of week 2 upon satisfactory demonstration of achieving the learning objectives and satisfactory completion of the formative and summative assessment. Week 1 would usually not contain any assessments, given the character and brevity of the course. However, depending on local contexts, some institutions might consider the daily reflections and the presentations delivered at the end of week 1 as a formative assessment.

Target audience

The course targets a mix of audiences potentially engaged with HRH strategy development, advocacy, policy, planning, information and communication and interpretation of HRH intelligence, namely:

- Senior technical, policy-making and managerial staff in national and provincial/state/ regional ministries of health, involved in strategic decision-making, policy development, planning and implementation, either for general HRH development or for specialist areas, e.g. information systems, training, workforce planning and projections, and financing.
- Senior decision-makers responsible for policies for finance, labour, education, social affairs or foreign affairs whose work intersects with health workforce (HWF) policy.
- Leaders of professional organizations – regulatory councils, specialization boards, professional associations – technical staff of international agencies and nongovernmental organizations, or senior technical and managerial staff involved in HRH policy matters.
- 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 an integration of theory and practice through small groups or pair work, simulations and practical exercises. The sequence of synchronous^a and asynchronous^a activities are structured to meet the learning objectives of each module. The amount and proportion of synchronous and asynchronous activities may be adapted to the preferences and standards of the educational institution that offers the course, taking into consideration participants' resources and availability.

With minor variations, the curricular units stimulate peer learning and propose presentations, seminars, discussions and sharing of experiences, and systematic reflection and planning. These are complemented with readings, input from experts and engagement in case studies.

^a Synchronous learning activities are those in which a group of students engage in learning at the same time regardless if there is teacher contact or the activities take place in-class or online. Asynchronous learning activities describe forms of education, instruction, and learning that do not occur in the same place or at the same time.

The final task will be an outline of a strategic leadership intervention that can be implemented in the participants' institutions. This and other products prepared by the participants will form the basis for formative and summative assessments of achievement of the learning objectives.

Considering the approach to teaching and learning, the educational modalities may vary depending on the prior level of knowledge and experience of the participants. In order to minimize this variability and to ensure minimum shared standards, it is recommended that participants engage in some preparatory reading before the beginning of the course.

Minimum institutional requirements

The course may be offered by academic institutions accredited by the national authorities for higher learning but also by nationally or internationally accredited continuing professional education providers, complying with relevant legislation.

Post-course evaluation

As with the master's course and the one-month course, the evaluation of the executive short course will be based on Kirkpatrick's Four Level Training Evaluation Model. Participant and tutor feedback will be gathered immediately after course completion (level 1); a course assessment will measure the level of learning (level 2); and an evaluation of the course's impact (levels 3 and 4) will be made through an online questionnaire to participants 6 and 12 months after completion of the course. If participants were nominated by an employer to attend the training, their supervisor will also receive an online questionnaire 12 months after course completion. Levels 3 and 4 evaluations are not easy to implement and the implementing institution should decide on how this may be achieved and then develop a detailed evaluation approach based on the above framework.

Course structure, learning outcomes and learning objectives

The executive course consists of two modules broken down into curricular units (CUs): six CUs for Module 1 and one comprehensive CU for Module 2. Each CU is further subdivided into learning sessions of different lengths. Module 1 is an intensive learning experience of 40–45 hours, whose impact can be maximized if participants complete the essential reading in advance of the course work (10 hours). This is highly recommended, but feasibility will depend on local circumstances. Module 2 is a practice-based assignment focused on a strategic leadership intervention in the participants' organizational context (40 hours).

Table 1 specifies the course learning outcomes and, for each module, the CU learning objectives.

Table 1 Learning outcomes and learning objectives

Course learning outcomes
<p>By the end of the executive course, participants should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand the requirements of development and management of the HWF, including linkages with other health system functional areas such as financing and service delivery.• critically interpret HRH evidence and information and apply this to policy.• develop and implement good governance arrangements that support participatory leadership in HRH.• mobilize and engage multiple stakeholders to coordinate policy dialogue and consensus-building in HRH policy-making and implementation.• set the vision and strategies to effectively steward the HRH agenda.
Learning objectives of Module 1, CU 1: HRH environment and introductory concepts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss the role and scope of HRH in the context of the global health agenda: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UHC and the WHO Global strategy on human resources for health: Workforce 2030.• Identify and describe the different components of health systems and HRH: Workforce 2030.• Differentiate between the components of developing and managing a sustainable HWF.
Learning objectives of Module 1, CU 2: Principles, theories and practices of HRH leadership and management
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the nature and role of leadership, governance and stewardship for different aspects of HRH.• Identify linkages between HRH and other health system functional areas, including financing, information systems and service delivery.• Characterize the role of policy, politics, stakeholder engagement and evidence-informed policy dialogue for shared decision-making.• Describe the process to conduct a stakeholder analysis in HRH policy-making.• Identify the considerations in developing and negotiating a national HRH strategy/plan.
Learning objectives of Module 1, CU 3: HLM dynamics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize and explain the importance of the health labour market (HLM) to inform the HRH policy development process.• Identify and describe the different components, dynamics and flows of the HLM.• Interpret findings of the analysis of the dynamics of the HLM and articulate relevant policy options.
Learning objectives of Module 1, CU 4: HRH education

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