

HRH ACTION FRAMEWORK: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH FOR ADDRESSING HEALTH WORKFORCE ISSUES

BACKGROUND

In order to support country leaders to assess their human resources for health (HRH) management and planning gaps, the HRH Action Framework (HAF) website (<http://www.capacityproject.org/framework/>) was developed as an initiative of the Global Health Workforce Alliance and represents a collaborative effort between USAID and the World Health Organization. CapacityPlus provides expertise and guidance for maintaining the site.

The substantive work to develop the HAF began at a meeting in 2005 sponsored by USAID and the World Health Organization and hosted by the Pan American Health Organization. Representatives from multilateral and bilateral agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the academic community participated in the meeting and contributed to the development of this common technical framework for HRH.

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

The HAF is designed to assist governments and health managers to develop and implement strategies to achieve an effective and sustainable health workforce. By using a comprehensive approach, the HAF helps users address staff shortages, uneven distribution of staff, gaps in skills and competencies, low retention, and poor motivation, among other challenges.

HOW IT WORKS

The HAF diagram includes six clickable Action Fields (HR Management Systems, Leadership, Partnership, Finance, Education, and Policy) and four clickable Action Cycles (Situational Analysis, Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring and Evaluation).

To ensure a comprehensive approach, users will eventually need to address all Action Fields and Cycles. However, the HAF is constructed so that, based on the user's particular areas of interest, the user can select any Action Field or Cycle and drill down to access relevant tools, guidelines, and resources. Users can also learn more about indicators to measure the improved health workforce outcomes resulting from the implementation.

While the HAF is applicable in all countries, the way a user approaches it will be influenced by the elements specific to his/her country context, including the labor market. The outcomes of applying the HAF will also be influenced by the strength of other components in the user's health system (e.g., availability of drugs and equipment, level of technology, or number and condition of health facilities).

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Designed to precede any HAF implementation work, the Critical Success Factors help users make this systematic and comprehensive approach work well. The HAF includes both content-related factors (e.g., results-focused planning and practices, and data-driven decision-making), as well as process-related factors, (e.g., country-led initiatives and multistakeholder involvement). The Critical Success Factors also include HRH-specific definitions.

IMPROVED HEALTH WORKFORCE

The HAF helps users to improve the health workforce as measured by the following indicators:

- Percentage of health facilities with staffing levels that meet the requirements of the HRH plan and professional staff numbers
- Vacancy, turnover, and retention rates
- Absenteeism
- Rural/urban distribution
- Staff satisfaction (based on attitude surveys)
- Percentage of total budget spent on staff salaries and allowances.

PRIORITY PROGRAMS

The HAF provides guidance on how to utilize priority programs to focus on better health outcomes; most of them even set specific outcome targets for their condition of interest. However, for the delivery of their interventions and for recording and reporting, programs depend in most places almost entirely on the general health services. Oversight, training, and sometimes incentives are used to stimulate engagement of health workers and strengthen program-specific capabilities. Almost all priority programs use a similar approach in their interaction with health workers, and almost all require equitable, effective, efficient, and accessible services close to their clients/patients to reach the number of people to attain their targets.

COUNTRY EXAMPLES

Many countries and programs have used the HAF to guide their HRH strategies and plans. The website features case studies containing practical information about how to use the HAF from Uganda, Kenya, Peru, and Vietnam.