Global Health Workforce Network

Terms of reference for thematic hub on policy dialogue on community-based health workers

May 2017

Background

The WHO Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030\(^1\) (the” Global Strategy”) recognizes a continuing need for a transnational agenda on human resources for health. This can be achieved by fostering effective coordination, alignment and accountability through a network of international human resources for health (HRH) stakeholders and actors. Building on the experience and achievements of the Global Health Workforce Alliance over its 10 years of existence (2006–2016), WHO has agreed, at the request of Member States, to support at all levels of the Organization the establishment of a global network for HRH collaboration.

The specific objectives of the Global Health Workforce Network (GHWN)\(^2\) are:

1. To inform high-level political engagement, intersectoral and multilateral policy dialogue in support of the implementation of the WHO Global Strategy on HRH at global, regional and country levels.
2. To provide a forum, in relation to the implementation of the WHO Global Strategy, for multi-sector and multi stakeholder agenda setting, sharing of best practices, and harmonization and alignment of international support to HRH.
3. To foster global monitoring and mutual accountability on international HRH goals, targets and commitments, effectively linked with United Nations system processes and mechanisms for monitoring of UHC and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and operating in close coherence with existing multilateral human rights frameworks and institutions.

Rationale for a hub on policy dialogue on community-based health workers

Integrating various types of community-based health workers (CHWs) in the healthcare system has the potential to reduce inequities in access to essential health services, particularly in under-served or excluded, vulnerable populations. In the last few years, there has been growing interest in and attention to this potential. The Global Strategy encourages countries to adopt a diverse, sustainable skills mix. The goal is to harness the potential of these cadres within inter-professional primary care teams, and to contribute to the attainment of universal health coverage and the health targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

WHO has initiated a process to develop guidelines to assist national governments, as well as national and international partners, to improve the design, implementation and performance of CHW programmes. The guidelines will provide recommendations on issues such as the selection,

\(^1\) [http://www.who.int/hrh/resources/globstrathrh-2030/en/](http://www.who.int/hrh/resources/globstrathrh-2030/en/)

\(^2\) [http://www.who.int/hrh/network/en/](http://www.who.int/hrh/network/en/)
education, regulation, remuneration, supervision and support, management, quality and career advancement prospects of these cadres. While the process and methodology to develop the recommendations in the guidelines and the membership of the Guideline Development Group are determined according to the procedures envisaged in the WHO handbook for guideline development, WHO will consider partnering with additional institutions in facilitating a dissemination and uptake of the guidelines recommendations once these are published. The implementation plan for the guidelines envisages that “WHO Headquarters will lead efforts to disseminate and build awareness of the guidelines with other international agencies, development partners and global health initiatives.”

**Objectives**

The objective of the CHW hub is promote awareness, ownership, dissemination and use of the emerging WHO guidelines on health policy and system support for community-based health workers.

**Activities for 2017-18**

Priority activities for the 2017-18 biennium include to:

1. Identify and scope opportunities for policy dialogue at global, regional and country level around the successful integration of CHW programmes in health systems, consistently with the emerging WHO guidelines.

2. Organize and deliver advocacy activities to facilitate the raising of awareness, ownership, uptake and implementation of the WHO guidelines.

While the guidelines (and the policy recommendations within them) are expected to be finalized only in the first half of 2018, relevant awareness and promotion activities can be undertaken even earlier, aiming to raise awareness on their relevance and rationale, so as to generate interest early in the process and lay the grounds for their dissemination and uptake once they are released.

**Governance and modus operandi**

Like other GHWN thematic hubs, the CHW thematic hub is established by WHO on a temporary basis as an advisory technical working group reporting to WHO. WHO develops the initial draft and approves the TORs of all thematic hubs, and monitors compliance with such TORs. WHO invites existing agencies to support the hubs on the basis of mutually agreed terms of reference. In the case of the CHW hub in particular, recognizing that there are hundreds of potentially interested institutions and that the hub will operate effectively only if its size is kept manageable, WHO will invite institutions that play a convening/facilitating role in the CHWs policy space.

The CHW hub members will not be remunerated for their participation in the hub activities, and will be requested to complete a declaration of interest, in compliance with relevant WHO policies, including the Framework for Engagement with Non-State Actors. The primary mode of interaction for the thematic hub is expected to be by e-mail and teleconferences, with possible face-to-face meetings organized as the need may arise and resources permitting, but always striving for cost-effectiveness.

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3 [http://who.int/hrh/community/en/](http://who.int/hrh/community/en/)

4 [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/75146/1/9789241548441_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/75146/1/9789241548441_eng.pdf)