

## Global Partnerships

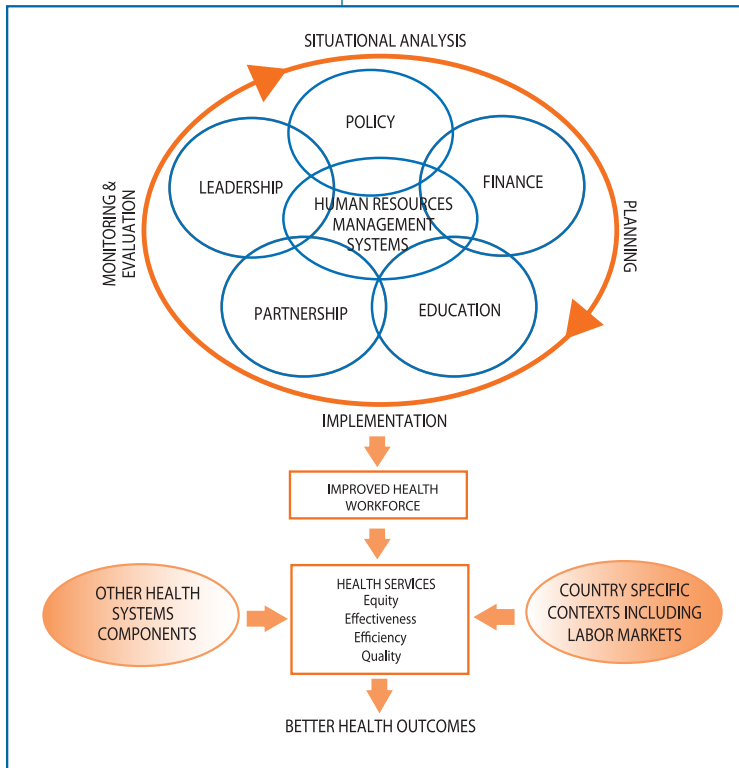
### Background and Strategy

The Capacity Project took a leadership role in enriching the global HRH dialogue and the related research, innovation and new technologies required to establish an evidence base for expanded work. Global partnerships were a key component in the Project’s success, both in engaging the global community in a nascent area that has become a high-priority issue, moving global and country-level action planning forward, gaining access to key decision-makers and successfully leveraging significant funds and human resources.

The Project fostered collaborative global partnerships for three strategic purposes:

- Reaching out to other global, regional and national entities to learn what was being planned and implemented so as to avoid duplication of efforts or unnecessary confusion in HRH approaches and application of tools
- Bringing greater synergy to resolving complex problems
- Strengthening HRH initiatives through effective knowledge sharing at all levels—globally, regionally and nationally.

### HRH Action Framework



### Results

#### The HRH Action Framework (HAF)

Designed to help governments and health managers build an effective and sustainable health workforce, the HAF is a global effort to bring a shared approach and resources to complex HRH issues at the country level. By using a comprehensive approach, the HAF assists in addressing staff shortages, uneven distribution of staff, gaps in skills and competencies and low retention and poor motivation, among other challenges.

The substantive work to develop the HAF began at a meeting in 2005 sponsored by USAID and WHO and hosted by PAHO. Representatives from multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs and the academic community brought a variety of experiences and perspectives, and together they developed a common technical framework for HRH. The Capacity Project played a key role in developing and refining the HAF, building it into a website (hosted by the Project) and sharing and applying it at the country level.

The HAF website disseminates the framework and operates as a dynamic planning and knowledge-sharing tool. It is available in English, French and Spanish. Versions on CD or in booklet format are available for audiences without Internet access. The framework guides those tasked with addressing HRH issues through the components or action fields that need to be addressed in a comprehensive HRH strategy.

Country applications of the HAF proved successful. In Uganda, for example, the MOH established five Analysis Subgroups corresponding to the HAF Action Fields. Recommendations from these groups contributed to refinement of the country's HRH Strategic Plan 2005–2020 through a supplement to the plan. Outcomes of the HAF application in Uganda also led to the addition of concrete recommendations on the health workforce into the Health System Master Plan requested by the President's Office.

In May 2009, 30 leading regional and national HRH experts convened to share information about the many ways the HAF has been used, identify strengths and weaknesses of different approaches and discuss dissemination initiatives to broaden HAF use. Participants reviewed HAF application experiences in Vietnam, Uganda, Kenya, Botswana, Afghanistan, Mozambique and the PAHO region (Peru in particular) and explored the value of using the HAF in HRH strengthening for tuberculosis control. Participants made recommendations for strengthening the HAF as a tool and a website and took responsibility for the implementation thereof.

#### ***HRH Action Workshops***

In many countries, HRH staff described their HRH systems as under-supported and fragmented, leading to few opportunities for them to come together and develop a common vision, share tools and resources or advocate effectively for HRH needs and initiatives. To address the need for an interactive mechanism that would promote south-to-south dialogue among HRH staff in African countries, the Project held HRH Action Workshops in South Africa and Ghana. Highly participatory, these workshops facilitated knowledge-sharing across countries. The first workshop involved 38 participants from 11 countries, while the second—conducted in partnership with GHWA, WHO and West African Health Organization—engaged 41 participants from 24 countries. Almost all of the participants in the two workshops were senior HR directors or practitioners working at the operational level within the MOH in their respective countries.

A year and a half after the first workshop, the Project assessed progress on country-level action plans developed during the workshop: 64% of planned activities had been completed and 29% were ongoing. In Tanzania, participants used their action plan to write a successful proposal to the Global Fund for an emergency hiring program.

Many participants considered the meeting methodology itself very effective. In Uganda, HRH leaders replicated the action workshop model at the national and district levels. The national workshop convened high-level country actors to share information and raise awareness about HRH issues, gather information to form a systems analysis and develop an HRH national agenda and prioritize HRH issues. The workshop proceedings led the development of the country's HRH strategic plan. The district-level workshop raised district planners' awareness of current HRH issues, and allowed them to develop district-specific action plans for local implementation. Although it was not clear that district managers received more HRH funds as a result of the workshop, the HR director reported anecdotally that the problem-solving process had substantially improved.



*"[Most helpful about the workshop was] sharing concepts, taking ideas from each other and starting with a plan... We learned from the mistakes of others about processes that have worked and did not work."*

—Ann Rono, director  
of HR, Kenya MOH

## Lessons Learned

- Global partnering is essential because the magnitude and complexity of HRH challenges require multi-institutional and cross-sectoral collaboration and information-sharing. This means HRH leaders and practitioners must think and intervene more holistically, transcend traditional organizational boundaries and actively contribute to global, regional and country alliances as everyday aspects of HRH work. Almost all of the Capacity Project's long-term initiatives were done in partnership, either at the global or local level.
- The HAF is a very powerful tool to help countries plan and intervene to address HRH challenges. It is important to stress that this type of resource could not have been developed by one organization acting alone. Collaboration produces a better product, and the act of collaboration means that it is far more likely to be adopted and used by a broad array of partners and leaders at all levels.
- Building networks of HR professionals is a very important component in creating a critical mass of HRH champions at the regional and country level. The HRH Action Workshops helped in this process, and must be supplemented by follow-up support to make the work sustainable. In countries where the Project had a presence, this support was available and the results more identifiable.
- Donor leadership sets an important tone in promoting global partnerships, and USAID's support for the Project's global and regional partnering efforts proved instrumental in their success.

Read *Global Partnerships: Strengthening HRH Approaches Together* (available at [www.capacityproject.org](http://www.capacityproject.org)).