Future Health Systems at Forum 2015

The network approach to strengthening health systems research capacity: experiences from the global South

Wednesday, 26 August 2015 • 16:30 - 17:45
Meeting Room 4, Philippine International Convention Centre, Manila, Philippines

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JOHNS HOPKINS BLOOMBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FORUM 2015

Future Health Systems
Innovations for equity
Health Systems

- broad and comprise many elements (governance; workforce; financing; information systems; products and technologies; service delivery) and interactions between them.
- affected by factors such as health education, community and individual action, the legislative and regulatory context and current and emerging social, economic and cultural circumstances.

Health Systems Research

- HSyR draws on a variety of disciplines: economics, sociology, anthropology, political science and epidemiology.
- HSyR is predominantly an applied field that starts with a problem or topic that arises from practical policy or implementation experience, and selects methods, whether qualitative or quantitative, that address this in the most appropriate manner.
- HSyR is different to classical public health research in that it has less of a focus on diseases and disease interventions than on the generic structures and processes through which these interventions are implemented.

Source: http://www.mrc.ac.uk/
The call for a network approach

- Many different types of actors are involved in health systems research, including universities, think tanks, ministries of health, and health service delivery organizations. **Strengthening networks between these different actors**, in the same country, is critical.  
  Source: Draft WHO symposium paper: What must be done to enhance capacity for health systems research?

- **Development of networks between different research organizations** (both within countries, and regionally or internationally), links to policy and decision-makers within the health system, and established national systems for identifying priority health systems research needs and supporting such research is critical.  
  Source: “Conceptual Framework for Institutional Capacity-Building” Health Systems 20/20, USAID

- **Capacity development** interventions typically need to be multi-faceted, responding to capacity needs at different levels (individual, organizational and environment/network) and tailored to the context where they are being implemented.
Network experiences of interest

- Governance of multi-partner capacity building networks
- The network approach to priority setting
- Power dynamics within and across partners (and donors)
- Advantages and challenges of a network approach to HSR capacity strengthening
- Transcending individual capacity strengthening to organizational, network, society?
- Trickle down effects of network relations, brokering and coalition building
- Monitoring and evaluation of outcomes
- Post-funding sustainability
The network approach to strengthening health systems research capacity: experiences from the global South

“LMIC-led” networked consortia have emerged in recent years as a novel attempt to develop health systems research (HSR) capacity. They are intended as a means of harnessing varied organizational strengths and establishing more sustained country capacity for HSR. Join Future Health Systems partners and other consortia from Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia peers at this talk show inspired panel session to share experience and learning on issues such as governance, priority setting, and donor negotiations; and to debate poignant questions around implementation challenges and long-term sustainability.

CHAIR:
Nasreen Jessani
Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, United States of America

SPEAKERS:
Chrispus Mayora
Makerere University School of Public Health, Uganda - Africa Hub, Future Health Systems

Rosanna Rorstrom
Karolinska Institute, Sweden - ARCADE

Ermin Erasmus
The University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa - CHEPSAA

Surekha Garimella
Public Health Foundation of India, India – Keystone Initiative

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Future Health Systems: The Africa Hub
Developing capacity for Health Systems Research collaboratively

Objective: Collaboratively build and strengthen capacity for undertaking and communicating Health Systems Research in East and Central African SPHs

Membership: Seven SPHs in six countries in East and Central Africa

Key strategies: Trainings (short courses), workshops, research and dissemination grants, joint research proposal training and writing, support for curriculum reviews, media trainings, conference presentations, inter-institutional student supervision, and student mentorship

Key outcomes: Regional short course curriculum, Library in Box, PR Publications, current on-going student researchers, supported graduate dissertation completion, honorary lecturers, policy engagements, etc.

www.hpsa-africa.org @hpsa_africa

ARCADE: building sustainable capacity for health research in Africa and Asia

• ARCADE (Africa/Asian Regional Capacity Development) is a large-scale education project that aims to support development of research capacity through innovative technological methods.
• 16 partnering institutions across Europe, Asia and Africa.
• ARCADE partners develop and deliver accessible online courses, blended learning modules, and joint programmes that will enable training of researchers in LMIC who might not otherwise have access to such material.
• Successes: New partnerships, joint-degree programmes, e-learning platform, freely accessible courses, grant writing workshops for students.
• Challenges: Internet access, insufficient bandwidth.

Overall objective
Increase African capacity to produce and use HPSR

Key CB strategies
- Assessment of HPSR capacity assets and needs
- CHEPSAA Emerging Leaders Programme
- Capacity building in curriculum development and the creation of two open access courses: Introduction to Complex Health Systems and Introduction to Health Policy and Systems Research
- Networking between consortium partners and other stakeholders

Selected outcomes
- Better understanding and wide publication of capacity assets and needs
- Emerging researchers and educators with enhanced capacity and the intention to stay in HPSR field
- Better curricula & teaching and wide dissemination of teaching across the world
- Contribution to creation of critical mass of scholars in Africa

Partner organisations and geography
- 7 African universities (South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria) and 4 European universities (Switzerland, UK, Sweden)

KEYSTONE: Building HPSR Capacity

KEYSTONE Objectives:
• Initiative: to enhance the production of relevant HPSR knowledge to meet the needs of the country
• Courses: to develop individual capacities and channelize latent capacities of participants, for investigating and addressing real-world problems of health systems and policy, through rigorous immersion in current HPSR approaches, frameworks and methodologies

Network: 15 institutions (national & international)

Key strategies:
• Building individual HPSR capacity through rigorous short course training in current HPSR frameworks and methodologies
• Cross-disciplinary engagement of researchers, health systems actors, and other learning networks, in learning and teaching HPSR
• Active dialogue with health system decision-makers and community-based organizations to ground the development of the HPSR field in real-world priorities
• Building organizational HPSR capacity by supporting partner organizations and alumni in replicating the short course in different settings

Key outcomes: first iteration of the short course has been rolled out to 20 participants and online mentoring ongoing