

THE PEOPLE FOR HEALTH PROJECT

Advancing Human Resources for Health in India

An initiative to strengthen human resources for health in India by engaging civil society organisations to support national health workforce policies, strategies, capacity building and skill transfer

2011-14

Supported by the European Union

India hosts 17 % of the world's population but human resources available for delivering health to 1.21 billion people have been a persistent challenge of the health system, and a major reason that the country has achieved only moderate to average health outcomes. This link between health outcomes and health workers is well-established. Some of the major challenges that come in the way of effective human resources for health (HRH) management include numbers, capacity, productivity and motivation. Significant shortages in some key positions and over-supply in others, HRH planning and management largely limited to administrative functions of recruitment, posting and transfers with little or no focus on capacity, motivation, productivity and incentives characterize the current scenario. Work culture remains poor and capacity building is often limited to conventional training programmes, of variable quality and limited applicability.

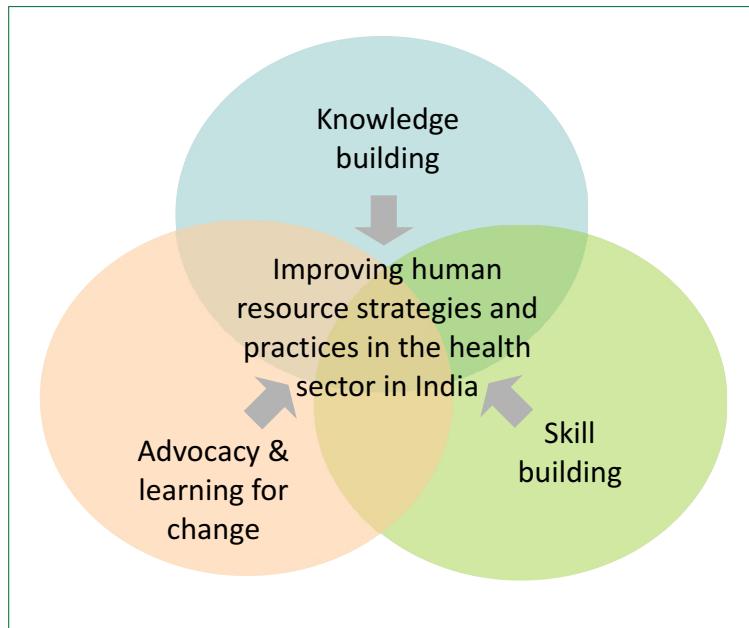
The need to strengthen HRH is widely felt across the Indian health sector, and across government and non-state actors, but HRH planning and management approaches have been limited by a lack of creativity and little or no action by civil society. Deeper involvement by multi-stakeholder groups in grappling with India's challenges with HRH could facilitate and support national and state-level work on strengthening policies, strategies and practices related to HRH in the country. There have been several efforts that have met with varying levels of success, and had variable impact. However, documentation has been scant and the transfer of knowledge between the actors and application in different settings has been inadequate.

The People for Health Project, focused on advancing HRH in India integrates three core areas brought together in the Indian context, keeping in view the need to integrate government, civil society and private sector domains:

- * Knowledge building (through operational research) and gathering evidence
- * Skills-building (capacity building) to strengthen cross-learning platforms and initiate new approaches and strategies
- * Advocacy and learning (through existing and new platforms) for change

Swasti is a Health Resource Centre working in South and South East Asia. The Public Health Foundation of India is an Indian network of institutions responding to India's public health challenges through education, training, research, communication and advocacy.





Together Swasti and PHFI are partnering to implement a three year initiative to advance HRH in India, funded by the European Union. This initiative seeks to engage civil society organisations and other non-state actors (including the private sector) and networks to strengthen national health workforce policies, strategies and practices through effective knowledge management and capacity building. The objective of this initiative is to offer solutions for critical health workforce issues in the health sector at the national level and in two Indian States.

Actions

Knowledge Building:

In a country as large and diverse as India, no one solution exists for health issues and several lessons have been learnt from various experiments. This initiative brings together and makes available information on HRH issues with an aim to allow for the development or strengthening of appropriate strategies and policies. Priority areas for exhaustive analysis, research and best practice documentation are:

1. HR planning
2. Recruitment processes
3. Motivation, compensation and retention
4. Performance management and work culture

5. Capacity building
6. Socio economic factors influencing recruitment
7. Capacity building methods and tools
8. Analysis of the impact of HR policy and practices

This knowledge base is going to be available to key stakeholders at different levels through wide dissemination in usable and accessible formats. Three research studies and five fact sheets developed during the course of three years will contribute to a body of knowledge on key HRH issues.

Skills-building and the transfer of knowledge:

Building on the knowledge base, capacity development of stakeholders will take place at two levels National and State. At the National level, the capacity development process includes study tours and immersion training; deep-dive workshops where specific topics are dealt with in-depth; and learning workshops for dissemination of what has worked in different settings. Rather than 'one-way' or 'one off' events, cross-learning oriented and follow-through activities are planned. At the State level, to support application, HR cells will be supported to shape policy, develop strategy and apply the learning from the knowledge generated. Results expected include cross-stakeholder pollination of ideas, approaches, strategies, tools and their application; and HR Cells of two State Governments supported to implement strategies to address key HR issues.

Advocacy and learning through existing and new platforms for change:

Platforms for learning, knowledge transfer and advocacy are going to be built, strengthened and facilitated. These will include round-table meetings, strategy development workshops, HR Cell Steering Committee meetings (State Government level), list servers and discussion forums, and an online HRH experience-sharing platform.

A robust, effective health workforce is one of the prime facilitators in achieving national health goals, and there is today deep recognition of this fact in India. This is an effort aimed at using this window of opportunity to contribute to a larger movement that is focused on strengthening diverse aspects of human resources for health.

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