

HRH Action Workshop
Topic Working Groups
Participant Notes

Human Resources Strategic Planning

Definition: The process of anticipating future staffing needs and HR related actions (everything to do with human resources) to ensure that a sufficient pool of talented and motivated people with skills and the necessary experience (make sure people move up through the organization, gaining relevant experience) will be available to meet those needs in the long-term (and short/mid-terms).

Notes:

1. Involve key stakeholders, including key political persons.
 - a. Communication is very important: you must exchange views and define expectations with all stakeholders from the start. (Tanzania)
 - b. Also, keep all stakeholders involved in Strategic Plan development process from the beginning. One strategy that worked in Zambia was holding short, regular meetings with the minister. In this way, the Permanent Secretary understood the background, process and goals thoroughly and was able to act as an HR champion when presenting to the wider audience (e.g., President). (Zambia)
2. Strategic Plans should be flexible to allow for unknowns and assumptions.
 - a. One strategy for staying flexible that worked in Uganda was to start by identifying resource availability (present and future/projections). In this way it is possible to decide on a timeframe for resource allocation and use, while allowing for flexibility for other areas. (Uganda)
 - b. Another strategy for this is using a longer term framework, while keeping Strategic Plans in the shorter term. For example, a ten-year framework and a five year Strategic Plan. (Namibia and other countries)
 - c. Strategic Plans should leave room for revision; they should be reviewed regularly – preferably annually. (UK)
3. Timeframes should be in line with national plans and training production periods.
 - a. It is important to have a clear long-term vision that is well-aligned with national plans. Uganda, as well as the five-year HSSP, has a long range plan that extends to 2025 (Uganda)
 - b. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) can provide a good basis for timeframe development. (Malawi)
 - c. Strategic Plans don't necessarily have to be "aligned" with other national plans, but care should be taken to ensure that they are not "misaligned." (Uganda)

- i. While it may sometimes be difficult to align Strategic Plans to (all) relevant national plans and training production periods, it is, however, critical that Strategic Plans are not misaligned with already established plans, their timelines and strategic goals.¹
 - d. In addition to long- and short-term plans, Strategic Plans should be linked to mid-term national plans. (Zambia)
 - e. There is no “rule of thumb” for developing a timeframe. (Uganda)
 - f. Staffing projections may be made for a longer period than the actual strategic plan, due to the time lag in training. (UK)
4. No one strategy can be successfully implemented on its own.
 - a. All strategies within the larger Strategic Plan are inextricably linked. You must therefore link them throughout planning and implementation processes to ensure success. (Zambia)
 5. Strategic Plan must be realistic.
 - a. Is it affordable? Is it do-able? (Tanzania)
 6. Many countries still need assistance in developing Strategic HR Plans
 - a. This has not been fully addressed. (Swaziland and other countries)
 7. Strategic Plans should be reviewed regularly to accommodate changing assumptions.
 - a. For instance, the current famine in Kenya requires healthcare workers to work in feeding stations, which is resulting in a shortage of health workers in HIV/AIDS clinics. This shortage is being addressed through hiring of more workers. What will happen to these workers when the famine ends? (Kenya)
 - b. Changes in budgets. (multiple countries)
 - c. Change in political infrastructure. (multiple countries)
 8. HR situation analysis needed for development of HR Strategic Plan (but level may depend on time and resources available).
 - a. Workforce assessment is an important basis for writing a Strategic Plan. However, if there is no time to undertake an assessment, this can be incorporated as a component of the Strategic Plan, and included in the next review. (United Kingdom)
 - b. Include workers outside the borders: for example, in South Sudan the Diaspora of workers should be included in the assessment as well as workers living in refugee camps and all other types of displaced workers. (South Sudan)
 - c. Assessment should also include qualitative data on service delivery satisfaction—Attitude is important. (Tanzania)
 9. Assumptions in Strategic Plans should be clear so that outcomes can be defended.
 - a. Funding, worker availability, etc., are a few of the assumptions that may be made in writing a short-, mid- or long-term Strategic Plan.

¹ General meaning behind/clarification of the comment/observation that was made.