

The Human Resources for Health Clearinghouse: Knowledge for Action

To Learn More:

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Introduction

The Capacity Project, a five-year global leadership project funded by USAID, is creating a participatory Human Resources for Health (HRH) Clearinghouse that will serve health sector leaders and managers and the growing global community of HRH professionals. The Clearinghouse will be an online portal that provides information and resources to health sector leaders and decision-makers to help them address the critical health workforce challenges they face, particularly in developing countries. The initial Clearinghouse will be launched in early 2006 with additional features added over the life of the Capacity Project.

We are designing this portal to serve those on the front lines of HRH action and decision-making, supporting both planning and implementation efforts. We are developing the design and content in partnership with other global organizations and prospective users to create new channels for knowledge sharing, foster innovation and build a professional HRH network. The Clearinghouse will offer high quality knowledge resources, including special collections with expert analysis and connections to local and global experts. Online interactive functions will allow users to contribute and comment on resources, offer input on how to improve the Clearinghouse and share their experiences with other users.

The success of the portal will ultimately hinge on its effective use. We are, therefore, developing the Clearinghouse in tandem with a knowledge management strategy that includes interactive demonstrations of the Clearinghouse in pre- and in-service training, workshops, meetings and desk-side consultations. We will show how the Clearinghouse can be used to support day-to-day decision-making and learning. We will also continually seek information about the most pressing issues facing our audiences to ensure that our knowledge sharing approaches support the evolving needs of users.

Objectives

- To create and maintain a global exchange of HRH evidence, tools and innovation
- To foster learning, knowledge sharing and dialogue across sectors, geographical barriers and cultural boundaries
- To strengthen national capacity and accelerate the implementation of evidence-based HRH solutions.

Clearinghouse Participants and Users

Primary Audience: National and sub-national health sector leaders and managers in developing countries (public and private sector)

Secondary Audience: International agencies working in HRH, the international development community, HRH professionals, researchers and staff of academic institutions, all others interested in addressing health workforce challenges

Without improved human capacity for health care, it will be impossible to sustain gains made in past decades in areas such as child survival and family planning while responding to newer demands such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The Capacity Project is an innovative global initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Designed to help developing countries respond to the challenges of implementing and sustaining quality health programs, the Capacity Project applies proven and promising approaches to improve the quality and use of priority health care services by:

- Improving workforce policies and planning
- Developing better education and training programs for the workforce
- Strengthening systems to support workforce performance.

Launched in October 2004, this five-year project is led by IntraHealth International and draws on the extensive experience and expertise of eight other global partners and numerous regional and local organizations. The Capacity Project works across health sectors and supports the objectives of USAID in the areas of Population and Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS, and Health, Infectious Diseases and Nutrition (including tuberculosis and maternal and child health).

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Approach

The Capacity Project is creating an interactive portal to support and engage a broad range of health sector decision-makers to take appropriate actions by providing access to quality, easy-to-filter HRH resources, including documents, tools, announcements of meetings and conferences, websites, directories of local and global experts and organizations and online communities. We plan to launch the portal in consultation with other global partners, to take advantage of complementary strengths, perspectives and knowledge sources.

The Clearinghouse will have two main dynamic components: an interactive knowledge database and an "HRH communities" component, through which participants can initiate or participate in a variety of on-going HRH discussions.

Interactive Knowledge Base

The knowledge base will contain resources that have been reviewed by Capacity Project and other technical experts for topic focus and quality. Participants will come to trust the portal to provide relevant and high quality information. We will also design mechanisms that encourage participants to contribute and comment on the design and resources included in the database.

Users can find resources in the interactive knowledge base through two complementary entry points. The first, scheduled for launch in early 2006, will allow participants to search or browse for resources by topic categories such as human resource management, pre-service education and incentives. Participants will also be able to filter their results, quickly identifying documents related to one region or of a particular type, such as curricula. With focused content and user-friendly filter and sort mechanisms, the Clearinghouse will help guide users to the resources that best meet their needs, reducing the time and effort needed in a typical web search.

The second entry point, to be launched later in 2006, will support the day-to-day decision-making of national and sub-national health sector leaders and managers. Primary users will tell us the most pressing HRH issues they face, and their information needs will mark the design and development of this innovative approach, which is currently in the research phase. We will then design an interface that links tools and evidence to these user-defined issues, which could include how to organize a stakeholder meeting or how to develop an emergency staffing plan. The interface will also provide decision-making guidance that recommends, for example, the types of data needed for decision-making and how to proceed when those data are absent or incomplete.

HRH Communities

We recognize that often the knowledge most helpful to implementation of human capacity development efforts is not in a document or on a website. Therefore, people and organizations will be identified as resources to remind Clearinghouse users that a telephone call or email may provide the information or assistance they need. Additionally, the Clearinghouse will provide mechanisms for relationship building and networking in the HRH community such as message boards, online communities and listservs. These services are scheduled for an incremental roll out during 2006.

The Capacity Project Partnership

