



First Global Symposium on Health Systems Research

Pre-symposium workshop on Health Policy and Systems Research capacity

Montreux 15th November 2010

Summary of Proceedings

This pre-symposium workshop focused on different levels of capacity for undertaking and utilising Health Policy and Systems Research (HPSR). Global, national, institutional, team and individual perspectives were used to generate and share experiences and insights amongst participants. Themes explored were:

1. HPSR capacity needs
2. Factors that facilitate and impede HPSR capacity development
3. HPSR capacity strengthening strategies.

Key messages arising from the workshop include the need for / value of:

Building coalitions, through -

- advocating and communicating the value and role of HPSR and the methods used among fellow researchers (north and south), country partners and large donors
- building country-level platforms encompassing academia, government and practitioners to:
 - develop and agree country-driven research agendas appropriate for the context
 - evaluate the available evidence
 - get research into policy and practice – translation of evidence into policy makers and practitioners' languages, using policy makers' lenses

Funding for research capacity

- look to country level partners (donors and government) to fund research, not only traditional research funders
- establish national streams of research funding, with core funding for national research institutions
- importance of long term funding, so as to build sustainable HPSR institutions and viable careers to attract and retain HPSR researchers

Harmonization and alignment of research-

- in line with national research agendas and countries' / policy makers' knowledge needs
- harmonization of the growing number of existing HPSR capacity building initiatives – there is a need to map the partnership / HPSR initiative terrain
- insufficient communication / lack of transparency across HPSR institutions / initiatives leading to duplication of research and overextension of local researchers



Articulating the methods of HSR

- tackling the challenges of the multidisciplinary nature of HPSR – need to articulate the methodological field
- need for greater clarity around the roles and fit of the different types of HPSR (operational, implementation, systems and policy analysis), and their methods
- identify the methodological skill sets required and develop the HPSR skills of early career researchers

Strengthening incentives and mentorship to support career development

- support for young researchers through mentoring and development of career paths
- build and utilise a critical mass of experienced HPSR researchers for peer support
- HPSR specialists needed

Developing HPSR partnerships to enable:-

- development of research synthesis methods, encompassing quantitative and qualitative data
- development of cross country / context-comparative research and lesson-learning
- promoting international recognition and legitimacy of HPSR
- collaboration, attraction and sharing of larger scale funding
- interest in diagonal approaches, which generate new research questions answerable through HPSR
- building on global opportunities / initiatives, such as the Millennium Development Goals, which can be a focus for cross country comparative HPSR research.