

GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH

Although the majority of health workers in developing countries are female, various forms of gender discrimination present significant barriers to achieving gender equality within the health workforce and to achieving gender equity in access to health care. When gender inequalities and discrimination operate in the workforce they may impede entry into health occupations and contribute to attrition, absences from work, lower productivity, poor health, and low morale of health workers.

Addressing gender-related discrimination and inequality in human resources for health (HRH) policy and planning, workforce development and management, and workforce support is essential to addressing the global shortage and maldistribution of health workers and improving the accessibility and quality of services.

A Woman- and Girl-Centered Approach

CapacityPlus's approach to strengthening the health workforce needed to implement quality health programs aligns with the first principle of the US Government's Global Health Initiative, a "focus on women, girls and gender equality." The project works across its focus areas to facilitate national governments' use of gender information to guide health workforce policy, planning, development, and management decisions that promote gender equality as an essential contributor to HRH system strengthening.

CapacityPlus integrates gender perspectives in all technical leadership collaborations with global and regional partners to develop new HRH frameworks, tools, guidelines, and evaluation activities. At the national level, the project fosters government support to engender HRH policies and strategic plans to be responsive to gender inequalities, discrimination, and violence in the workplace, as well as in health worker education, training, retention, and productivity initiatives.

What CapacityPlus Offers

CapacityPlus's assistance supports key programming recommendations included in the Global Health Initiative's supplemental guidance on women, girls, and gender equality principles. Ongoing activities, tools, and resources (some under development) include the following:

Leadership

- Guidelines for forming and sustaining effective national HRH stakeholder leadership groups that incorporate gender equality perspectives and promote the capacity of women to serve as decision-makers
- Gender and HRH eLearning course (including sessions on gender, gender and HRH, and workplace violence) that can be integrated into HR management and HRH leadership courses.

Policy and Planning

- Gender discrimination analysis tools, including an HR management rapid assessment tool, which promote evidence-based, gender-sensitive HRH strategy and policy development and revision approaches
- Community health worker effectiveness framework that assists countries to calculate how gender considerations may affect their overall approach to ensuring the effective contribution of community health workers to service delivery
- Open Source HR information systems that support gender-disaggregated data collection, analysis, and reporting for decision-making.

Workforce Development

- Innovative approaches for increasing health worker production by scaling-up preservice education and improving the management efficiency of professional schools including technical assistance and recommendations for promising practices to address the major gender discrimination barriers in preservice education for students and faculty.

Performance Support

- Technical assistance to provide ministries with evidence for decision-making on rationalized wages and for adopting appropriate wage policies to foster gender equity and contribute to health worker retention
- Strategies for work climate improvement that address issues such as discrimination based on marital and pregnancy status and family responsibilities, occupational and task segregation, wage/remuneration discrimination, and sexual harassment/assault.

Evidence-Based Approaches and Knowledge Sharing

- The largest HRH digital library for policy-makers, managers, and practitioners (www.hrhresourcecenter.org), with a substantial collection of HRH resources on gender issues.

For More Information

- Contact Maurice Middleberg, project director, mmiddleberg@capacityplus.org
- Visit www.capacityplus.org.

CapacityPlus Partnership

IntraHealth International (lead partner), Abt Associates, IMA World Health, Liverpool Associates in Tropical Health (LATH), Training Resources Group, Inc. (TRG)

Associate Partners

African Population & Health Research Center (APHRC), Asia-Pacific Action Alliance on Human Resources for Health (AAAH), West African Institute of Post-Graduate Management Studies (CESAG), Partners in Population and Development (PPD)

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