

HEALTH SYSTEMS IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT AFFECTED STATES THEMATIC WORKING GROUP

Introduction

The Health Systems in Fragile and Conflict Affected States Thematic Working Group is one of 10 TWGs of Health systems global¹.

Its vision is to support health systems for better health, equity and well-being by strengthening health policy and systems research, policy and practice communities with particular focus on the challenges faced by fragile and conflict affected states

Key outputs of the TWG since its inception in 2013 are:

- The development of a forum on all aspects of health systems in FCAS, drawing on the experience of a broad range of stakeholders to promote research and action for resilient, responsive, context specific health systems. The forum is hosted on LinkedIn (currently around 630 members) and through the symposia – technical meetings and business meetings. The TWG hosted these activities at the Cape Town symposium in 2016 and the Vancouver symposium in 2016 (attendance at technical meeting: x; attendance at business meeting: 30). Some TWG members also curated organised sessions on the theme of Enhancing health system resilience: absorbing shocks and sustaining gains in every setting and put together relevant panels of individual presentations.
- We have supported a special issue of [Conflict and Health: "Filling the void: Health systems in fragile and conflict affected states"](#), with highly accessed papers and to date 16 papers have been published and the special issue is still open.
- We have done a survey on research priorities on health systems in FCAS with publications on both the [research needs](#) and the [challenges of carrying out research in these environments](#). The studies are supported by 2 short briefing notes. The TWG has made some attempt at getting funding for southern-based researchers to carry out studies based on the research needs identified, but have not yet been successful.
- We are active in sharing knowledge generated by the TWG and other knowledge on health systems in FCAS, including through webinars and Tweet chats, and at workshops and conferences, including the biennial Global Symposium on Health Systems Research.
- Always seeking to expand our network, we funded applications to host meetings to promote dialogue on health systems in FCAS has supported events in Iraq, Liberia and Zimbabwe. Reports are on the website.

The TWG has a Steering Committee of four members that have been engaged from the start. The Steering Committee has monthly virtual meetings to make and implement work plans. For the last couple of year, we have been using a planning and reporting format provided by the HSG Secretariat. The Steering Committee is supported by a small Advisory Group through 3- 4 virtual meetings annually and e-mail communication.

¹<http://healthsystemsglobal.org/twg/>

The main activity of the TWG Business meeting in Vancouver was the start of the development of a longer-term strategic plan for the TWG. The output of that meeting has been reviewed. The format of [HSG's overall strategic plan for 2016-20](#) has been used to develop the first draft of a strategic plan for this TWG for January 2018- December 2020.

Process for completing the strategic plan:

1. Share draft strategic plan with Advisory Group, HSG Secretariat and HSG Board contact for TWGs, Karen Daniels for comment (September-October)
2. Revisions based on feedback
3. Share with TWG membership for feedback (mid-November)
4. Finalise the strategy and publish and disseminate to membership
5. Develop annual work plan to support Year 1 of the strategy.

Relation between strategy and annual work plan:

The most important aspect of the strategic plan are its strategic actions under the four strategic objectives (the first column in table below)
The second column has a range of 'possible activities' for each strategic action. These activities are not yet prioritised. They also do not have information yet as to how and when they could be implemented. The annual work plan will have details on which activities for each strategic action will have been chosen to be implemented in the coming year, including how and when.

Strategic Plan Health Systems In Fragile And Conflict Affected States Thematic Working Group 2018-2020

Vision	Support health systems for better health, equity and well-being by strengthening health policy and systems research, policy and practice communities with particular focus on the challenges faced by fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS)		
Mission	Promote, share and support multi-disciplinary research that draws upon the breadth of knowledge and experience of key actors in health in FCAS through support to a range of research, policy and advocacy actions.		
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES			
1. Build a dynamic HPSR community with interest in HPSR in FCAS that encompasses policy-makers, researchers, NGOs, media and funders at global and national levels	2. Advance the field of HPSR in FCAS through further development of research priorities, methods, advocacy for funding and contributing to capacity building of researchers in FCAS	3. Engage with and support relevant communities to advocate for and use HPSR in FCAS, with a particular emphasis on research relevant to ensuring equitable process and outcomes	4. Ensure TWG HSFCAS is robust, adaptive and sustainable

Strategic Objectives and Strategic Actions	Proposed activities
1. Build a dynamic HPSR community with interest in HPSR in FCAS that encompasses policy-makers, researchers, NGOs, media and funders at global and national levels	
1.1 Ensure inclusion of all relevant stakeholders among members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review current membership and interests - Identify gaps to fill - Recruit more members to ensure inclusiveness, aiming for both geographic and gender balance as far as possible
1.2 Ensure activities reflect the interests of the membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop appropriate communication strategy - Maintain a zero-tolerance approach to discriminatory attitudes within the workings of the group

Strategic Objectives and Strategic Actions	Proposed activities
1.3 Identify and apply suitable tools/fora to interactively connect the HPSR FCAS community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify and implement one or two web-based communication tools in addition to LinkedIn -Explore opportunities for face to face meetings with members
1.4 Establish one or more member working groups to take specific topics forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify topics that would benefit from forming a working group -Set up mechanism to form working groups, support structure and feedback mechanism
1.5 Stimulate the development of regional networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build on alumnae networks (e.g. participants on FCAS-related courses) - Build on experience of previous network meetings
2. Advance the field of HPSR in FCAS through further development of research priorities, methods, advocacy for funding, and contributing to capacity building of researchers in FCAS	
2.1 Continue to assess and disseminate research priorities in the field of HPSR in FCAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote and build upon initial research needs assessment and challenges papers - Find means to update research priorities
2.2 Promote the use of appropriate methods for HPSR in FCAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify appropriateness of different methodologies and draft guidelines -To this end, establish links with relevant other TWGs (e.g. Shapes, Teaching and Learning, Ethics)
2.3 Advocate for funding for HPSR in FCAS and relevant capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a targeted campaign/strategy for persuading funders that HPSR FCAS is important supporting their aid investments - Create demand for research, e.g. through capacity building of researchers; access to funds within country programmes
2.4 Promote capacity building of researchers in FCAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore ways of connecting FCAS researchers and experienced internationals -Identify and disseminate opportunities for capacity building (eg. Emerging Voices, RinGs Building Back Better project on gender frameworks and tools for working in FCAS)

Strategic Objectives and Strategic Actions	Proposed activities
3. Engage with and support relevant communities to advocate for and use HPSR in FCAS	
3.1 Build partnerships with relevant TWGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify common themes and activities - Identify mechanisms for regular communication with other TWGs
3.2 Build strategic alliances with donors, implementers, policy makers, networks and global institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review existing links (eg UHC2030; MSF science day, RinGs Building Back Better project, Alliance for Health Policy Research) and prioritise based on mutual interest and opportunities - to identify opportunities for engagement and collaborative working
4. Ensure TWG HSFCAS is robust, adaptive and sustainable	
4.1 Develop sustainable governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop procedure for electing SC members and succession planning - Develop procedure for selecting members of Advisory Group, ensuring a gender and geographic balance as far as possible - Develop clear and costed annual plan - Provide annual reports of activities, achievements and expenditure -Continue regular meetings with HSG secretariat and advisory groups
4.2 Obtain (minimal) operational funding or in-kind support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build on experience with Wellcome Trust funding -Promote our strategy, raise interest -Develop funded proposals to fund implementation of the strategy.
4.3 Engage more TWG members in the design and implementation of the annual operational plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify activities to be carried out by member Working Groups - Provide support and guidance to the WG to achieve agreed outputs
4.4 Regular review of strategy in the light of the changing context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Carry out annual review with Advisory group and HSG secretariat -Review strategy annually and adapt if needed