

# Global Public Health Perspectives on Leadership and Management



# Global Public Health Perspectives on Leadership and Management

Edited by

Sonu Goel, Kritika Upadhyay  
and Nandita Bhatnagar

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# CHAPTER 1

## HEALTH SYSTEM LEADERSHIP AND ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

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### **Overview**

This chapter dwells on the Concept and importance of Health Leadership and Governance and describes the elements and principles of good governance in strengthening health systems. Governance is an essential component of the health system. Its importance is increasing with globalization, privatization, rapidly changing disease profiles, and technology applications in health, which are opening new opportunities in the prevention, early detection, and management of diseases with precision medicine. Leadership and Governance is one of the six building blocks of the health system framework of WHO. It is very important to ensure the availability of high-quality healthcare. This block is also important as it impacts the other five building blocks. A smooth, functioning health system is essential for achieving and sustaining universal health coverage. There has been an increase in financial resources for healthcare, the emergence of universal health care and a global thrust towards health as a human right.

## Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, the participants will be conversant with-

1. Concept and importance of Governance in the health sector in achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
2. Elements and principles of good governance in strengthening the health system for UHC.
3. Role of governance in implementing Health in All Policies.

## Leadership, Governance and Stewardship

Leadership, governance, and stewardship are the first building blocks of the WHO Health System Framework. This building block addresses the other five blocks, making it vital to achieve Universal Health Coverage. Although the terms leadership, governance, and stewardship are often used interchangeably, they are different, though there is some overlap between them. **Healthcare leadership** involves guiding and motivating healthcare providers to deliver high-quality services and achieve goals. Leadership influences patient outcomes, staff satisfaction, and the health system's success.

**Governance** refers to the rules and regulations that direct and control a healthcare system and assign accountability. Governance bodies, such as the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare, governing bodies oversee the strategic direction, financial performance, and compliance with regulations.

**Stewardship** involves managing healthcare resources, including human, financial, and physical resources, both public and private. Healthcare leaders and managers are expected to use these resources judiciously to benefit patients, staff, and the community. It also ensures that the health system and programmes are sustainable and can continue to provide high-quality care to the public.

Some LMIC countries close to achieving Universal Health Coverage have a powerful component of Leadership and Stewardship, including Thailand, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Rwanda, Ghana, Brazil and Costa Rica. India has made good progress with initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat, which

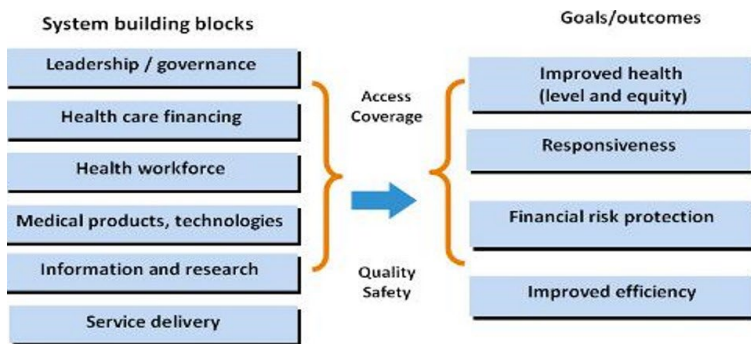


includes the world's largest social insurance scheme for hospital care and expanded services at the primary care level.

## Health System Framework and Health Leadership and Governance

A quick look at the health system and its building blocks will help us contextualize Leadership and governance of the health system to achieve the goal of universal health coverage. WHO's Health System Framework (Fig.1-1) is the most widely accepted globally and allows us to compare health systems over time in a country and with other countries(WHO 2007). However, the social determinants of health and community and civil society engagement-related aspects are not represented in this framework. These are vital for sustainable improvement in health care.

Fig. 1 WHO Health System Framework



The six building blocks of the framework can be broadly divided into four categories:

1. **Input Blocks:** These include health financing and the health workforce. Without these, no other blocks can function, and no output or results will be possible. If financing is not available, neither healthcare infrastructure nor supplies can be built, procured, or maintained, nor can the health workforce be hired and trained. Since the primary purpose of the health system is to provide services, it is labour-intensive; hence, health workforce wages and benefits account for a sizeable consumption of finances.

2. **Output blocks:** The purpose of the health system is to identify services using medical technology, equipment, medicines, and other supplies. These must be available for approximate outputs for access, coverage, quality, and safe services.
3. **Cross-cutting blocks:** Health information helps monitor the status of the input and output blocks, including service delivery, the health status of the target population, and equity.
4. **Although listed as one of the six blocks, leadership and governance** provide the overall policy and regulation of the five health system blocks, it is all about the building blocks and social determinants of health. It also includes mainstreaming the private sector and aligning it with national priorities.

## **Leadership/Governance and Stewardship in Health System**

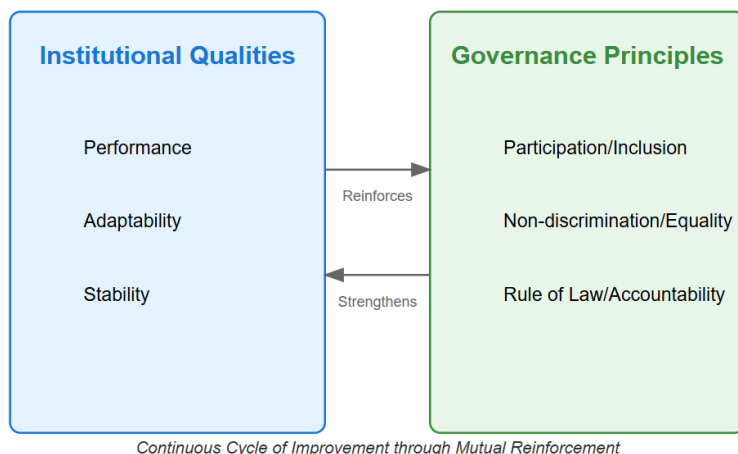
The health system cannot deliver effective and efficient services without good leadership. The importance of governance for development and health and how to measure it has received more attention. Let us look at what the terms governance, leadership and stewardship mean in simple words. According to the World Bank, "Governance is how power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (Kaufmann and Kraay 2008). In simple words, "Leadership is a process of social influence which maximizes efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal" (Kevin Kruse 2013).

According to the Oxford dictionary, "Stewardship is the job of supervising or taking care of something, such as an organization or property" These three terms, i.e. governance, leadership and stewardship, overlap. WHO's World Health Report 2000 views stewardship as the effective trusteeship of national health. It is a type of governance that acts as an agent for its citizens (Saltman and Ferroussier-Davis 2000).

**Stewardship Role of the Government:** The government should "steward" the national resources, maintaining and improving them to maximize the benefit to the population. In health, this means being ultimately responsible for carefully managing the citizens' well-being. Stewardship in health is the very essence of good government. It means establishing the best and fairest health system possible. People's health must always be a national priority; the government's responsibility is continuous and permanent (WHO 2000). Governance involves ensuring that strategic

policy frameworks exist. Good governance includes the following elements integrated into the health system: Good governance principles must closely interact with institutional qualities. These must be reflected in the day-to-day work of all institutions from the community level to the national level (McKulka 2011).

Fig. 2: Linkages of governing principles and institutional qualities



Since there is an overlap between leadership, governance and stewardship, the tasks under these three have been clubbed together, which include:

1. The Strategic Vision states the broad direction in which the government is committed to providing healthcare for the population. This vision is reflected in the good governance of the health system.
2. Respect for the rule of law, regulation, effective oversight, and ensuring rules of law related to health are implemented and violations are dealt with promptly.
3. Formulating Strategic Policy Directions, implementation, Essential Public Health Functions, and participation. A fit between policy objectives and culture must be ensured.
4. Building Coalitions and partnerships with all stakeholders
5. Public Participation: The healthcare services are meant for the public. Hence, the public must be included in policy-making, planning, service

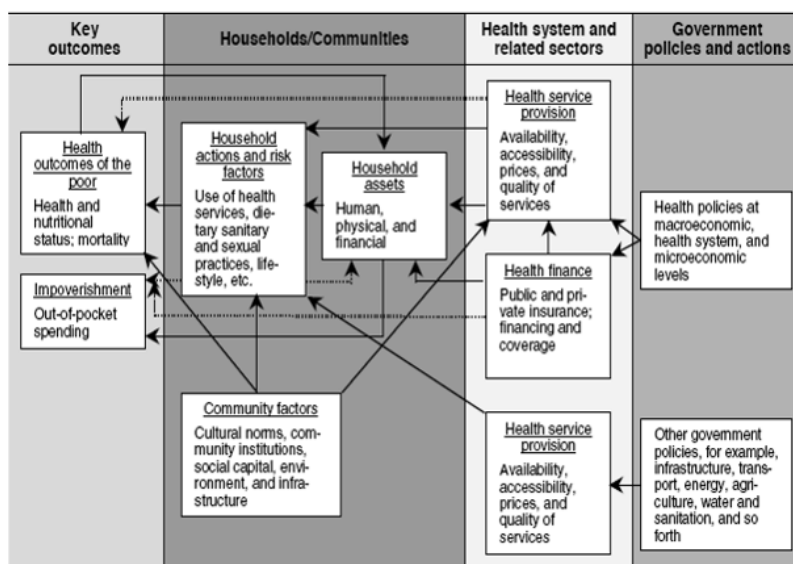
delivery and healthcare monitoring through coalition building, participation & consensus orientation with the public and other important stakeholders.

6. Attention to system design: The health system needs to adapt to changing public health needs, respond to the changing burden of disease, evolving application of technology in healthcare, emerging threats of new infections, and changing demographic profiles.
7. Accountability: Accountability is intrinsic to good governance and must be integral to the health system. For accountability, the roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined for every functionary at all health system levels, from policymakers to grassroots-level health functionaries. The need for greater accountability is more today with increased funding and growing demand to show results. Accountability involves (Priyadarshi and Kumar 2020):
  - Delegation or an understanding of how services are provided
  - Adequate financing to ensure adequate resources are available to deliver services
  - Performance and quality around the actual supply of services
  - Easy access and flow of relevant information to monitor and evaluate performance
  - Enforcement, such as imposition of punishments or rewards for performance
8. Transparency generates trust among the public and other stakeholders in the health system. It also strengthens the accountability of various service providers at all health system levels.
9. Effective & Efficient public sector management: It includes Responsiveness, Equity & Inclusion, Information and Intelligence and Ethics

Health in All Policies is an important tool to address social determinants of Health across non-health sectors (Fig. 2). Inter-sectoral actions need to be planned by each sector to address determinants of population health. Population health is determined by the government and included in health policy and related sectors. It is also important for the governance structure to manage relationships with and between all stakeholders in health:

individuals, households, communities, NGOs, private players and others. All the sectors should include strategies to address behaviour change by action at household and community levels by engaging grassroots functionaries' health, education, rural and urban, social services, water supply & sanitation, agriculture, irrigation, housing, etc. WHO has published various examples worldwide of how countries have implemented HIAP (Blas E 2011).

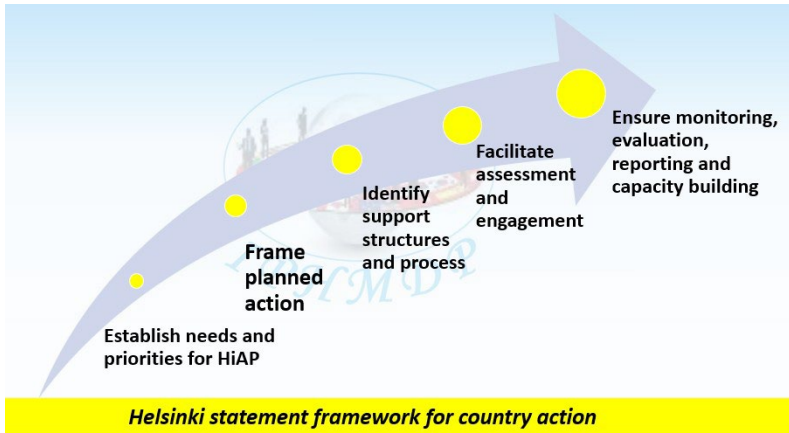
Fig. 3: Social Determinants of Health



The governance must take necessary steps to establish the needs and priorities, frame actions for all concerned sectors, and identify the support structures and processes engaging available mechanisms such as cabinet of ministers from the national level right up to local self-government at village and municipalities in city levels to oversee the implementation (Fig. 3) (Blas E 2011).

The government needs to facilitate the engagement of all stakeholders in implementing and assessing progress. It also needs to build the capacity of service providers at all levels. Regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms should be in place to assess the progress of implementing action plans in all concerned sectors.

Fig. 4: Helsinki Declaration framework of country-level action to implement Health in All Policies (Source: Author's self-generated)



The following Health in All Policies elements need attention in planning and implementing HiAP.

1. Promote health, equity, and sustainability: Health equity and sustainable improvement in health are essential to promoting the health of a population. 'Leave no one out' is the theme of the sustainable development goals adopted by all UN member countries. The marginalized population groups need to be identified, and disaggregated data made available to identify the groups who are left out.
2. Support intersectoral collaboration: Identification of the role of each sector is vital for the successful achievement of health goals in a sustainable manner. Engagement of all sectors with clear identification of actions to be taken by them is important to establish accountability. Tools such as the Health Impact Assessment and Health Lens Analysis of WHO may be used to highlight the impact of sectoral policies and projects on the population's health (Lee et al. 2013).
3. Benefit multiple partners: The identified partners must see their role and what benefits accrue to them by incorporating actions to improve their health. For example, healthy students will have better learning, healthy employees will improve productivity, etc.