

KENYA: FROM ASSESSMENT TO ACTION

Developing a National Strategy for Leadership and Management in Kenya's Health Sector

Even while realizing that effective leaders and managers are the foundation for achieving the Millennium Development Goals for health, Kenya's Ministry of Medical Services and Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation were faced with weak management capacity at district and facility levels.

To determine the root causes of leadership and management gaps, and the effective pathways to address them, the Ministries worked with the Leadership, Management and Sustainability (LMS) program of Management Sciences for Health (MSH) to conduct a national assessment of managers at all levels of the health system in 2008. The Ministries are currently utilizing the assessment data and recommendations to implement significant changes in how health managers are prepared and trained.

(continued...)

Key Findings

More than 90% of health managers surveyed view leadership and management skills as important for their effectiveness on the job.

- The majority of respondents (61%) reported that they were inadequately prepared or not prepared at all for their current role; 70% of doctors and 74% of nurses agreed with this statement.
- 30% of health managers interviewed had not received any pre- or in-service training in leadership and management; among those who had received some training, 58% had not undertaken pre-service training.
- Training was least accessible at the district level, where 43% of district hospital staff and 34% of district health team members reported being untrained in leadership and management. By contrast, only 27% of staff at the headquarters level cited the absence of training opportunities.
- The five most common areas where health workers desired additional training were: management (53.8%), financial management (29.8%), human resource management (29.8%), leadership (26.0%), and procurement (15.4%).

Assessment Overview

The assessment took a three-pronged approach: it examined individual health managers' competencies as well as the capacity of Kenyan institutions that train health workers in order to document leadership and management development needs; it evaluated the degree to which the needs identified were being met or had the potential to be met through current training programs offered in Kenya; and it made recommendations for developing a national strategy for leadership and management strengthening and sustainability. The Ministries were equal partners with LMS and fully engaged in the assessment process, including providing staff to collect the data, which enhanced their ownership of the results and recommendations.

A Need for Leadership and Management Training

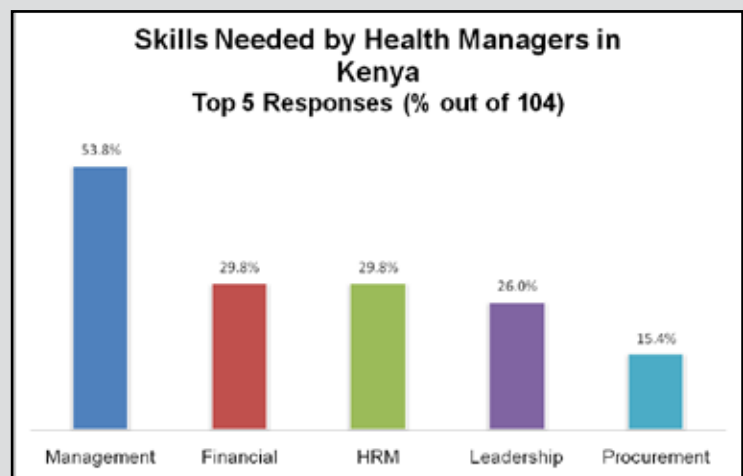
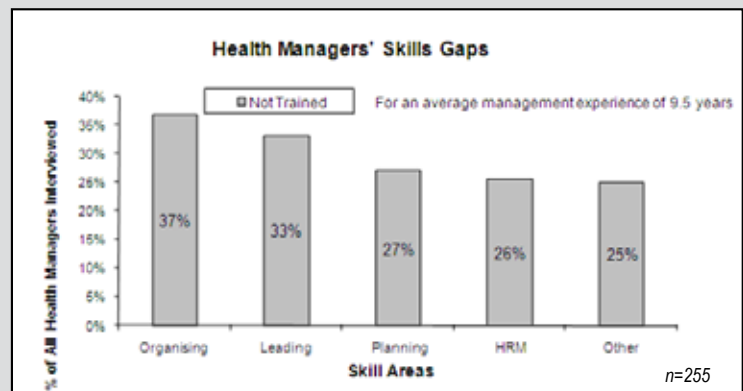
The assessment has provided the Ministries with the data they need to make changes in the way health professionals are trained by Kenyan pre-service and in-service programs, informed by the actual needs of those tasked with making the health system work. The Ministries' involvement in the assessment lends a credibility to the findings and recommendations that would not have existed had the staff themselves not led the charge. This enabled the assessment team to quickly gain support at the highest levels of the Ministries. Indeed, when the assessment team

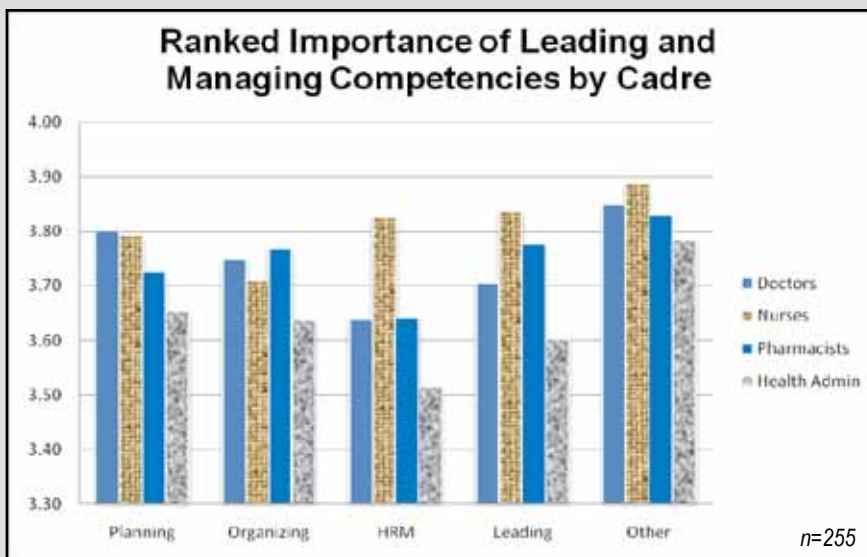
presented the findings to one of the Permanent Secretaries at the Ministry office in Ayfa House, he said, "We needed this yesterday!"

Dr. Harrison Kiambati, Head of Technical Planning, Monitoring, and Coordination in the Ministry of Medical Services, and Team Leader for the assessment noted that "Effective leadership and management are the foundation of quality and responsiveness in the health sector. They provide the cement

as envisaged under the National Health Sector Strategic Plan II to reduce inequalities in health care and reverse the downward trends in health-related impact through a process of coordinated planning and implementation at all levels. With the progress being made as a result of the findings and recommendations of the assessment and accompanying strategy, Kenya is moving close to ensuring that all health managers are able to practice effective leadership and management."

Assessment Findings





learn on [the] job, which is challenging since I have to handle the management and leadership issues.” Noting that the learning approach employed in the health sector has traditionally been didactic, one-time trainings that take workers away from their jobs for long periods, the assessment recommended more opportunities for action-oriented experiential learning.

The assessment also revealed that the role of the health manager is not valued nor is there a career path in place for health professionals who are interested in health management. Recommendations therefore include the creation of an explicit career path for health managers, including the definition of skills and competencies required, as well as a certification process to create a professional cadre of health managers.

Assessment Results

The findings document a consistent pattern of gaps in management and leadership capacity among health managers surveyed. The majority openly acknowledged that they do not have the leadership and management preparation to succeed. One district public health officer said, “I expected to do technical work but now... I have to do management work.” A program officer/ pharmacist commented, “I was not trained as a manager so I have to



Actions

To ensure that health professionals receive practical, action-oriented training in leadership and management at the pre-service, in-service and senior leader

levels, a group of health education professionals from institutions of higher education, professional associations, development partners and the Ministries are harmonizing the curricula at each of these levels, with the support of LMS. The revised curricula will be based on the professional competencies in leadership and management that health managers need at each level of

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service. Once this work is complete and the proposed curricula are adopted, institutions that train health professionals will be required to use them. The curricula are expected to be completed by the end of the 2009 calendar year.

The 2008 assessment and its recommendations have also contributed to a reform process for Kenya’s provincial hospitals. Three facilities have been selected to pilot the reforms. They will be guided by an assessment currently being conducted by the Ministries and

LMS. The assessment will document the current situation of the following areas: human resource management, pharmaceutical management, laboratory management, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, HMIS, quality assurance, infrastructure and equipment. Assessment results will inform subsequent technical assistance, including the development of a strategic plan by each pilot provincial hospital. Strategic priorities will likely include leadership and management capacity development and management systems strengthening, HR systems and a stronger organizational structure, and strengthened commodities systems and management.

Methodology

The assessment was rolled out in three phases including a pre-test of the data collection tools. Phase 1 was designed to collect information from managers currently working in the health sector, learn about their experiences and identify their training needs. It included 133 open-ended interviews and the administration of 255 closed questionnaires to health managers in the public and private sectors at district, provincial, and central levels. Phase 2 was designed to identify the kind of training currently offered and determine whether or not it is meeting the needs identified in Phase 1. It included open-ended interviews, close-ended questionnaires, and a review of the curricula at 12 institutions of higher education that offer leadership and management training for health professionals.



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