

# Considerations for Policy

## Peace, Conflict and Development II: *Supporting Human Resources for Health*

### Principles to Guide Human Resource Policy in Conflict-affected Settings

- Investing early in long-term Human Resources (HR) development is a key component of building more effective and sustainable health systems that can address the legacy of conflict.
- HR development is a long-term issue that calls for long-term thinking, strategic funding and development of linkages and relationships. Donors should commit to collaboration, capacity building and training at the Ministry of Health level.
- Maintaining and promoting morale deserves attention. This has implications for how one provides salary support, recurrent funding, career development, training and logistical support. It is important for donors and others to recognise that human resources are context and conflict sensitive. Ignoring this undermines what otherwise may appear to be technically good interventions.
- Planning of staffing, infrastructure and supplies must be coordinated. Donors must develop facilities that can be adequately staffed and likewise send staff to places where they can be adequately supervised and supported by financial and material resources.
- Managing expectations is critical – donors should be encouraged to recognise resource limitations and the way in which staff have been affected and respond to these limitations.

## **Health and Human Resources Policy**

### ***Key Goals and Strategies for Consideration***

- Support development of central capacity to formulate policy and develop medium to long term plans around staffing and workforce training.
- Facilitate the debate concerning integration of the private and alternative health sectors.
- Despite opportunities to invest heavily in the immediate post-conflict phase, avoid establishing facilities and services that can not be sustained in the long term.
- Facilitate a country-level policy debate around the approach by the state, NGOs and governments to fund Human Resources development.
- Support and resource a coordinating mechanism that engages the Ministry of Health with all stakeholders operating in the area.
- Facilitate, contribute to and support government in restructuring the workforce. This includes coordination of training and matching training with the required cadre of staff to run an effective health system.
- Encourage NGOs to address the human resource impact of their projects and demonstrate in their planning how they will enhance local capacity.
- Commit to strengthening in-country institutions that have a primary role to play in training and supporting Human Resources development.
- Address Human Resources diaspora by assisting in identifying qualified individuals who have left the conflict but who may be willing to contribute to short term periods to work on projects. These skilled individuals may be able to advise and coordinate initiatives from diaspora communities.
- Adopt a Whole of Government (WoG) approach to Human Resources development by working closely with AusAID, Department of Health and Ageing, Department of Education and Department of Defence to plan and deliver human resource interventions.
- Collate available knowledge and expertise in retaining contact with skilled personnel that move during conflict by developing appropriate human resource information systems. Basic information systems are required early on to manage the human resource base and coordinate salary payments.

Comments on these materials would be appreciated: please submit these to the Project Coordinator, Anne Bunde-Birouste ([ab.birouste@unsw.edu.au](mailto:ab.birouste@unsw.edu.au)) or to the Project Leader, Anthony Zwi ([a.zwi@unsw.edu.au](mailto:a.zwi@unsw.edu.au)). For information on related projects, please check the project website at <http://healthandconflict.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/>.