



Health Systems 20/20 and Health Governance

The Challenge

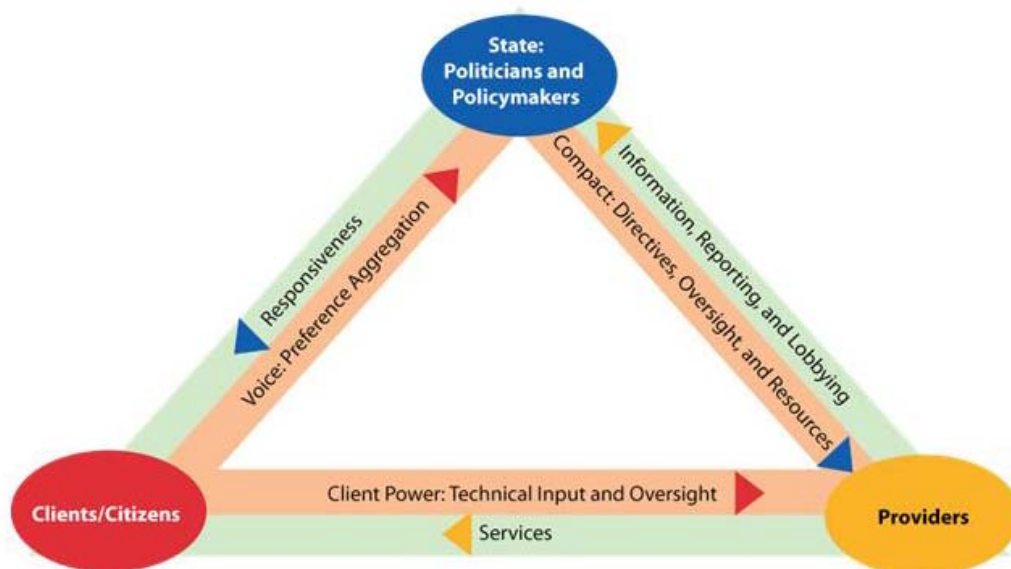
Strong rules, regulations, and institutions are critical to ensuring that a health system is governed efficiently. These factors help hold government and health providers accountable to citizens for the decisions that they make and the services that they provide. However, in many countries, decision making and priority setting in the health sector are opaque processes, carried out without the broad engagement of civil society, and resulting in ineffective planning and implementation and permitting the use of public goods for private gain. Weak mechanisms for ensuring accountability, transparency, and responsiveness further contribute to poor health outcomes.

The Health Systems 20/20 Approach

Health Systems 20/20 approaches health governance through a framework that defines the rules, roles, responsibilities, and institutions that shape the interactions among three main sets of actors: citizens/ service users, government officials, and health service providers (see figure). These interactions include how governments respond to citizen demands, how providers and citizens engage to improve service quality, and how citizen and provider groups advocate and report on health concerns.

Recognizing that health governance issues vary depending on the local context, Health Systems 20/20 works with USAID missions and country counterparts to

Health Systems 20/20 Health Governance Framework



Source: Adapted from World Bank 2004, 2007

Brief

identify specific governance problems and design targeted solutions. These solutions address both the demand and supply sides of health governance:

- On the demand side, the project works with citizens and oversight entities inside and outside of the government to enhance each actor's capacity to exercise their voice and demand accountability.
- On the supply side, the project develops the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Health and assists different health system actors to share information, incorporate external input in the decision-making process, and develop performance incentives.

Health Systems 20/20 provides global leadership and lessons learned to USAID, international partners, and country counterparts on how to incorporate best practices in governance into health initiatives for improved health system performance.

Applying Our Approach

Examples of Health Systems 20/20's support to improve health governance include the following:

- In the Philippines, Health Systems 20/20, through a grant to a local NGO, supported a pilot effort to establish facility-based Quality Assurance Partnership Committees, or QAPCs. Three QAPCs in two provinces in Mindanao bring together local leaders and government officials, health service providers, and community representatives to address issues related to access, availability, and quality of maternal and child health services. The committees, which still are active following the completion of the pilot, are giving civil society a voice in service delivery, quality, and accountability.

"The civil society is active in the [Health Sector Development Program], both in its development and implementation. We are key stakeholders in health and are...participating in the health sector. The country is showing changes in its health services and this is what we want to see."

Civil society organization representative, in The System-wide Effects of the Scale-Up of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Services in Ethiopia (www.healthsystems2020.org).

- In Nigeria, Health Systems 20/20 is examining the role of non-state actors, including community-based, faith-based, and nongovernmental organizations, in providing services and advocating for people living with HIV (PLHIV). The project also is assessing the role of non-health government ministries and agencies in "mainstreaming HIV/AIDS" – developing their own HIV/AIDS prevention and care policies and practices – in order to understand the direct and indirect impact of HIV in the workplace. These two studies aim to inform stakeholders and policymakers on how to better engage civil society organizations that work with PLHIV, and they will help government ministries to better conceptualize their role in mainstreaming efforts.

- In Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Yemen, Health Systems 20/20 has developed Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to visually identify health facility service needs. In Yemen, where the GIS has been fully implemented, policymakers have used the information generated to determine human resource needs and to allocate financial resources; the GIS has also been used for non-health functions such as allocating the provision of electricity and determining the location of election polling places.
- In Afghanistan, Kenya, Rwanda, and Vietnam, Health Systems 20/20 is working to institutionalize capacity to conduct regular National Health Accounts (NHA) exercises so that policymakers have a sustainable evidence base for decision making. The project helps health ministries disseminate NHA results to civil society organizations to increase transparency and create possibilities for citizen voice and advocacy on health resource allocation.

Health Systems 20/20 is USAID's flagship project for strengthening health systems worldwide. By supporting countries to improve their health financing, governance, operations, and institutional capacities, Health Systems 20/20 helps eliminate barriers to the delivery and use of priority health care, such as HIV/AIDS services, tuberculosis treatment, reproductive health services, and maternal and child health care.

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