Gauging the organizational health of national public health associations

A determinant of their capacity to have an impact on public health

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Purpose of survey

Determine
1. The state of organizational governance of national public health associations (PHAs)
2. The factors that facilitate and constrain their governance effectiveness
3. Connectedness of national PHAs with the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA)
4. Areas of public health focus for PHAs and the WFPHA
Method

Online survey

- Administered to 82 PHAs in 80 countries
- Response rate 70% (57 out of 82 PHAs)
- Responses
  - By Language: English 40, French 11, Spanish 6
  - By WHO Regions:
    - PAHO (Americas and Caribbean): 10/10 (100%)
    - WPRO (Western Pacific Regional Office): 8/8 (100%)
    - EMRO (Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office): 6/6 (100%)
    - AFRO (Africa Regional Office): 14/16 (88%)
    - SEARO (South East Asia Regional Office): 4/5 (80%)
    - EURO (European Regional Office): 15/37 (40%)

Respondent PHAs

(By language of survey responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Australia</td>
<td>15. Israel</td>
<td>28. Serbia</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Bosnia and Herzegovina (1)</td>
<td>16. Italy</td>
<td>29. South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Bosnia and Herzegovina (2)</td>
<td>17. Japan</td>
<td>30. Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Brazil</td>
<td>18. Korea</td>
<td>31. Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Canada</td>
<td>19. Lithuania</td>
<td>32. Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Czech Republic</td>
<td>22. Mozambique</td>
<td>35. Turkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Ethiopia</td>
<td>24. New Zealand</td>
<td>37. UK (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. India</td>
<td>25. Nigeria</td>
<td>38. United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. Yemen</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Non-respondent PHAs: Bangladesh, Kenya, Malawi, Albania, Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Macedonia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, UK (2)
Prioritized PHA roles and responsibilities
(on a scale of 1-5 where 1 is not important and 5 is critically important)

- Increase awareness among decision-makers and the public about public health: 4.5
- Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues: 4.4
- Mobilize partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems: 4.3
- Maintain a competent public health care workforce: 4.1
- Conduct research to develop solutions to public health problems: 4.0
- Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health: 3.9
- Analyze and investigate health problems and health hazards: 3.9
- Monitor health status to identify and solve health problems: 3.8
- Enforce laws and regulations that protect health: 3.8
- Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of public health services: 3.8
- Link people to health services they need: 3.3

Open-ended responses: Advocate for health-related policy and practices, create a strong civil society voice for public health, and act as a ‘catalyst’, ‘convener’, and ‘collaborator’

Factors influencing the governance effectiveness of PHAs
(On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is very little and 5 is very big)

Constraining factors
- Lack of financial resources for the PHA: 4.1
- Lack of mentoring for future PHA leaders: 2.9
- Lack of competent persons serving on the governing body: 2.9
- Ineffective leadership: 2.9
- Lack of understanding about good governance practices: 2.8
- Lack of accurate information for good strategic planning: 2.8
- Lack of transparency and accountability: 2.6

Supporting factors
- High degree of integrity and ethical behavior of association: 4.3
- Competent persons serving in the governing body: 4.2
- High degree of transparency and accountability in decision-making: 4.1
- Free and informed media relations: 3.9
- Clarity about how to practice good governance: 3.9
- Accurate information for planning and evaluating the work of the PHA: 3.8
- Broad-based engagement of stakeholders in decision-making: 3.7
- Availability of staff to implement governance decisions: 3.7
- Government support (moral and financial): 3.6
- Sufficient financial resources: 3.5
- High degree of donor interest: 3.2

Lack of financial resources is a big constraint
Integrity and competence of the PHA leaders are big enablers
Effective Governing Practices

Continuous Governance Enhancement

- Cultivating Accountability
- Engaging Stakeholders
- Setting a Shared Strategic Direction
- Stewarding Resources

Current governance practices of the PHAs
(On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is very little and 5 is fully)

- Cultivating accountability
  - Shares information: 4.1
  - Assures internal accountability in the association: 4.0
  - Cultivates personal and collective accountability: 3.8
  - Maintains accountability of the PHA to its external stakeholders: 3.7
  - Provides effective financial and quality oversight: 3.7
  - Measures performance: 3.5

- Engaging stakeholders
  - Engages with PHA members: 4.0
  - Builds relationship of trust with: 4.0
  - Promotes equity: 4.0
  - Practices gender-responsive: 3.8
  - Engages PHA’s diverse: 3.7
  - Collaborates with other sectors: 3.7
  - Engages with health workers: 3.5
  - Engages with communities: 3.5

- Setting shared strategic direction
  - Defines a strategic plan for the PHA: 4.1
  - Establishes shared vision among key stakeholders: 4.0
  - Monitors progress in implementing the strategic plan: 3.7
  - Builds leadership capacity within the PHA: 3.7

- Stewarding resources
  - Practices ethical and moral integrity: 4.4
  - Facilitates corruption: 4.3
  - Wise uses resources: 4.1
  - Pursues efficiency and sustainability: 4.0
  - Uses information, evidence and technology in governance: 3.0
  - Mobilizes resources: 3.5
Continuous governance enhancement
(On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is very little and 5 is fully)

- Builds diversity in the association: 3.9
- Cultivates governance competencies: 3.7
- Organizes governance orientation and continuous governance education: 3.4
- Performs regular governance assessments: 3.1

Awareness among PHAs of WFPHA’s strategic plan and goals

- We are aware that WFPHA has adopted 2013-2017 Strategic Plan: 80%
- We are aware that this Strategic Plan has five key goals: 64%
- We are aware what these five key goals are: 55%
WFPHA’s likelihood of accomplishing its Strategic Plan goals in the next 5 years

(On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is will not accomplish and 5 is will fully accomplish)

- Goal 3: Expand and strengthen partnerships
  - Likelihood: 4.1

- Goal 1: Advocate for effective global policies to improve the health of populations
  - Likelihood: 4.0

- Goal 4: Promote and support the advancement of strong member associations
  - Likelihood: 3.9

- Goal 2: Advance public health practice, education, and training and research
  - Likelihood: 3.8

- Goal 5: Build an effective, responsive and sustainable WFPHA
  - Likelihood: 3.8

Public health topics by their importance for the PHAs

(On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is not much important and 5 is very important)

- Tobacco Control
  - Importance: 4.6
- Social Determinants of Health
  - Importance: 4.5
- Prevention of the Non-communicable diseases
  - Importance: 4.5
- Environmental/Health
  - Importance: 4.4
- Public Health Education & Training
  - Importance: 4.4
- Access to primary health care (e.g., Universal Health Coverage)
  - Importance: 4.3
- Health Equity
  - Importance: 4.3
- Maternal, newborn and child health (including reproductive health)
  - Importance: 4.2
- Public health law and regulations
  - Importance: 4.1
- Nutrition/Food security
  - Importance: 4.0
- Public health emergency preparedness (disaster risk management)
  - Importance: 4.0
- Immunization
  - Importance: 4.0
- Infectious disease prevention & control (including HIV/AIDS)
  - Importance: 3.9
- Mental/Health
  - Importance: 3.9
- Psychoactive Substances & Addiction
  - Importance: 3.8
- Water supply & sanitation
  - Importance: 3.8
- Healthy ageing
  - Importance: 3.8
- Access to high quality medicines and medical equipment/devices
  - Importance: 3.7
- Oral/Health
  - Importance: 3.6
- Digital technologies for health
  - Importance: 3.5
PHAs’ willingness to be involved in the implementation of core PH functions

(On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is will not be much involved, and 5 is will be very involved)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocate on public health issues</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop national network for public health experts</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and disseminate a review of the scientific evidence base for public health</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide continuing education opportunities for the public health workforce</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage broad partnerships among public and private health organizations</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and support the public health workforce</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define the goals of the public health system</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach consensus on essential functions of the public health system</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen public health legislation &amp; regulations</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish national public health leadership capabilities</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen public health system structures</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement public health system performance assessments</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish standards for minimum public health programs and services</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen public health service delivery</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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PHAs’ major expectations from the WFPHA (N=49)

- Help build organizational capacity and competencies of national public health associations (n=20)
  - Provide advice/funding/technical support/twinning/information exchange platform
- Help establish partnerships / connection with other stakeholders in global public health domain (n=10)
  - Create opportunities for consultation with PHAs
- Create opportunities for advocacy on global health policy and action (n=10)
  - Greater visibility and influence of WFPHA at global level and more opportunities for PHA participation in WFPHA activities
- Assist with public health practice, education, training and research (n=5)
  - Develop online continuing education courses for PHA members in conjunction with universities
  - Provide technical assistance to improve national public health journals
- Increase effectiveness and reach of WFPHA (n=4)
  - Improve WFPHA information and communications with its members about
    - Its activities
    - Activities of member PHAs
## Survey conclusions

- Governance emerged an important issue for PHAs  
  – Central to their organizational relevancy and survival  
- Several important constraints that limit effective governance identified  
  – Up to WFPHA and its PHAs to now see how best to respond and address them  
- Survey results are useful to PHAs  
  – For assessing the governance challenges they face and they see as needing attention and investment  
- Survey provides useful feedback to WFPHA  
  – Helps it validate its strategic plan and focus its efforts