World Health Organization

STRATEGIES AND SYNERGIES

Linking Global Health Initiatives (GHIs) with

UHC-Partnership, UHC2030, and the SDG3 Global Action Plan

Strategies and Synergies: Linking Global Health Initiatives (GHIs) with UHC-Partnership, UHC2030, and the SDG3 Global Action Plan

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WHO reference number: WHO/2024HQ-2024-00839

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Suggested citation. The Global Health architecture around Universal Health Coverage using a Primary Health Care approach. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Cataloguing-in-Publication (CIP) data. CIP data are available at http://apps.who.int/iris.

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PREFACE

This document is one of a series of overviews of Global Health Initiatives, developed to provide WHO staff and their partners with a summary of the strategic goals and purpose, operations, and core processes of selected Global Health Initiatives (GHIs), and how a Primary Health Care (PHC) approach can optimize the support provided by those GHIs. It includes information on how to apply PHC principles, particularly those in the PHC Operational Framework, to inform WHO staff working with countries to optimally use the opportunity of GHI and other donor funding to advance a PHC approach to attaining Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The document was developed in collaboration with WHO staff at all three levels of the organization (Headquarter, regional level and country office level), as well as the secretariats of The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and The Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF). Additional inputs were received from a diverse range of global, regional and national experts.

The aim of this overview is:

- To provide WHO and Global Fund staff with practical information that they can apply to assist member states to access and optimally use GHI and other donor funding and support, while applying PHC principles to the design, implementation and monitoring of such investments; and
- To present practical examples, links to key references, and lessons learnt on feasible ways to apply the primary health care operational framework to funding requests. It includes examples and case studies showing how primary health care approaches are used to optimize Global Fund investments at the country level.

The principal target audiences for this document include WHO country and regional office staff who are working on GHI and related donor funding requests; GHI staff supporting countries to implement or reprogramme donor support; Ministry of Health counterparts, such as those from Planning, Budgeting, Health Systems and various disease- or programme-specific and external consultants who support any aspect of GHI funding. This reference will be of use to both those familiar with GHIs who wish to learn more about PHC approaches, as well as PHC and health systems strengthening (HSS) experts who are increasingly called to help inform development and implementation of GHI support at the regional and country level.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This overview was produced by the WHO Primary Health Care Special Programme under the direction of Dr Suraya Dalil and Dr Shamsuzzoha Syed (WHO Primary Health Care Special Programme) in collaboration with Mr Joe Kutzin (WHO Health Governance and Finance Department).

Tova Tampe and Thomas O'Connell (Global Health Expert, former WHO Staff) provided overall technical leadership and coordination. The principal writing team consisted of Lundi-Anne Omam, assisted by John Grundy and Dijana Spasenoska.

Significant contributions to the overall concept of this overview was provided by WHO Headquarter and Regional Office teams as well as members of the Global Health Initiative Task Team: Alastair Robb, Elena Altieri, Annalise Guisset, Archana Shah, Blerta Maliqi, Casey Downey, Cherian Varghese, Christophe Schmachtel, Clarisse Mason, Denis Porignon, Frédérique Geron, Gerard Schmets, Gina Samaan, Giorgio Cometto, Herman Montenegro, Hernan Von Muhlenbrock, Isadora Quick, Jan Hendrik Schmitz Guinote, John Fogarty, Linda Lucy Boulanger, Ludy Suryantoro, Mai Eltigany, Maria Skarphedinsdottir, Menno Van Hilten, Nathalie Vande Maele, Nicoletta De Lissandri, Nuria Toro Polanco, Richard Carr, Richard Gregory, Samir Sodha, Sean Cockerham, Shamsuzzoha Babar Syed, Shannon Barkley, Sophie Genay-Diliautas, Stephanie Anh Ngo, Susan Sparkes, Temo Waqanivalu. A number of colleagues from WHO Regional Offices made pertinent suggestions to this overview including Irtaza Chaudhri, Awad Mataria, Faraz Khalid, Omar Sam, Cyprian Humphrey Karamagi; Juliet Nabyonga, Soledad Urrutia, Amalia Del Riego and Ogochukwu Chukwujekwu.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GFATM	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GFF	Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents
GHI	Global Health Initiatives
ILO	International Labour Organization
NCDs	Non-communicable Diseases
PHC	Primary Health Care
PHC-GHI Toolbox	Primary Health Care for Global Health Initiatives Toolbox
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDG3 GAP	Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UHC-P	Universal Health Coverage - Partnerships
UN	United Nations
UN	Women United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

SETTING THE SCENE

This overview provides a summary of existing partnerships and partner platforms that highlight the importance of fostering collaborations in universal health coverage (UHC) using a primary health care (PHC) lens. The different partnership platforms that exist around UHC in global health are presented with focus on collaborating towards the achievement of universal health coverage. Many global health stakeholders and countries recognise the need to collaborate to combine and harmonise strategies in fostering the achievement of universal health coverage. This is evidence by the partnership platforms that exist for collaboration around UHC.

This document is divided into to two main parts:

Part 1

Presents the concept of primary health care as an approach to achieve UHC

Part 2

Presents the different global health partnership platforms that exist to achieve UHC

Throughout this overview we share tools, resources and key notes to facilitate access to important information. These key resources and tools are hyperlinked. A detailed database of Primary Health Care resources and case studies have been compiled and made available in the Primary Health Care for Global Health Initiatives Toolbox (PHC-GHI Toolbox).

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Part 1

Primary Health Care as an Important Approach to Achieving Universal Health Coverage

Globally, hundreds of millions of people still do not have access to essential health care and many low-and-middle income countries still cannot provide quality health care to their populations, leading to an increase in disease burden.

At the UN General Assembly in 2019, world leaders acknowledged the necessity to commit in ensuing that universal health coverage (UHC) is achieved by 2030. This is to ensure that everyone has access to quality health care whenever in need[1]. The COVID-19 pandemic severely slowed progress in strengthening health systems and has further limited access to services for communicable and non-communicable diseases, disproportionately affecting marginalised and vulnerable communities[2]. This further highlighted the need for health systems to be strengthened and ensure equitable access to health care by everyone whenever needed.

[1] https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(19)30035-X/fulltext

[2] https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/09/29/lets-reverse-our-slogans-no-healthy-life-without-universal-health-coverage/

In order to reach UHC, health systems must be oriented towards a Primary Health Care (PHC) approach. Primary Health Care is a whole-of-society approach to health that aims at ensuring the highest possible level of health and well-being and their equitable distribution by focusing on people's needs and as early as possible along the continuum from health promotion and disease prevention to treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care, and as close as feasible to people's everyday environment." PHC entails three inter-related and synergistic components: i) meet people's health needs through comprehensive promotive, protective, preventive, curative, rehabilitative, and palliative care throughout the life course; ii) systematically address broader determinants of health through evidence-informed public policies; and iii) empower individuals, families, and communities to optimize their health as advocates for PHC policies.

In a bid to operationalise this global policy, an operational framework with 14 levers was developed in the form of practical actions and interventions to accelerate progress in strengthening disease-specific programmes and services. To further guide countries in accessing decisions and actions implemented to strengthen their PHC systems to achieve universal health coverage, a global normative PHC measurement and monitoring framework has been developed and can be accessed here.

Worthy of note is that, the PHC and UHC agendas are both important global health policies that are synergistic with one another. Achieving universal health coverage largely depends on strong primary health care systems[3],[4],[5]. The Astana Declaration reaffirmed PHC as the cornerstone of health systems strengthening with proven links to improving health outcomes, equity, increasing health security and improving cost efficiency. This recommitment to PHC by country government comes after over forty years since the Alma Ata declaration in 1978.

The attainment of UHC requires that every person including the poor have access to quality health care without any financial barrier. By this, governments will need to make bold political decisions to increase health care expenditures to ensure access to care for populations in lower socioeconomic groups who most often have high unmet health care needs[6]. This is possible by strengthening primary health care systems which have been proven to reduce the overall cost needed to meet peoples health needs[7],[8].

[3] Sacks E, Schleiff M, Were M, Chowdhury AM, Perry HB. Communities, universal health coverage and primary health care. Bull World Health Organ. 2020 Nov 1;98(11):773-780. doi: 10.2471/BLT.20.252445. Epub 2020 Aug 27. PMID: 33177774; PMCID: PMC7607457.

[4] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5903888/

[5] https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jep.13445

[6] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5903888/

[7] Universal health coverage and primary care, Thailand - PMC (nih.gov)

[8] UHC report 2019: 2019-uhc-report.pdf (who.int)

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Part 2

Global Health Partnership Platforms to Achieve Universal Health Coverage

The commitment made by world leaders in 2019 to achieve health for all by 2030 by providing universal health coverage requires an unprecedented level of partnerships and collaboration among country governments, donors, civil society and other stakeholders.

Different partnership platforms exist, all with a common goal of streamlining efforts in the health sector and face contemporary challenges. Below are summarises of existing partnerships to buttress efforts in achieving universal health coverage.

2.1

UHC-Partnership

The Universal Health Coverage Partnership (UHC-P)[9] is one of the World Health Organization's (WHO) largest initiatives on international cooperation for UHC and PHC. The initiative, which was jointly developed in 2011 by seven donors, that included the European Union, France, Belgium, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom, now included are115 countries and continues to expand.

The UHC-P was created to promote UHC, aligned with SDG target 3.8, by supporting policy dialogue and providing technical assistance in order to enable governments to strengthen health systems in governance, access to health products, workforce, financing, information and service delivery, while enabling effective development cooperation. Recently, the UHC-P has developed a specific focus on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) to respond to the ever-increasing burden of NCDs on population health and health systems. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UHC-P is also working on health security, thanks to its flexible and catalytic approach, to build medium-term sustainable health emergency preparedness capacities, while supporting the response to the pandemic, including vaccination, and the continuity of essential services. More on the UHC-P can be found here.

[9] Universal Health Coverage Partnership [website]. Geneva: WHO; 2021 (https://www.uhcpartnership.net/).

Box 1: UHC-P principles

UHC-P Working Principles

A flexible and bottom-up approach

The UHC-P supports countries with flexible funds and agile programming, adapting quickly to evolving contexts and priorities, as in the response to COVID-19 including preparedness, prevention, diagnostic, treatment and vaccination.

Prepare, respond and maintain essential health services

The UHC-P supports governments to protect communities from the impacts of COVID-19, maintain essential health services and strengthen country capacities to face future health threats.

In-country technical assistance

120 long-term senior policy advisers deployed in countries worldwide to support Member States and ensure approaches and assistance fit for context.

Participatory governance

The UHC-P continues to advocate for policy dialogue and social participation, especially in times of crisis, in order to build and maintain trust and ensure policy adherence.

Primary Health Care as the foundation of strong health systems

Primary health care is the foundation of strong health systems and it is central to the COVID-19 response and beyond. It serves as a critical first line of defense during outbreaks, in preventing diseases and improving the health of all communities.

2.2

SDG3 Global Action Plan

The **Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All** is a global health partnership that brings together 13 multilateral health, development and humanitarian agencies (Table 1) to better support countries in accelerating progress towards achieving the health-related sustainable development goals (SDGs). The agencies as a group complement each other, although each agency has a specific mandate. collectively, the agencies channel around one-third of development assistance for health annually and work towards advancing all the SDG 3 targets.

Under the Global Action Plan, the agencies are better aligning their ways of working to reduce inefficiencies and provide more streamlined support to countries. Through the Plan, the agencies will support countries deliver on the health-related SDGs and related international commitments to health, such as the UN High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage and the Astana Conference on Primary Health Care. An overview summarising the SDG3 GAP success indicator and framework can be found here.

Table 1: SDG3 GAP agencies and mandate

Agency	Mandate
Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance	Immunization and health systems strengthening
the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF)	Reproductive, maternal, new-born, child, and adolescent health and nutrition (RMNCAH-N)
the International Labour Organization (ILO)	Normative guidance for labour standards
The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (The Global Fund)	HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria
the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/ AIDS (UNAIDS)	Normative guidelines on HIV and AIDS
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Eradicate poverty and reduce inequality
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Improving life situation of children
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)	Gender equality and women empowerment
the World Bank Group;	Health and Development Financing
World Food Programme (WFP)	Food supplies, nutrition and logistics
the World Health Organization (WHO)	Normative guidance on Health

SGD3 GAP Accelerator working group

To foster collaboration and best practice sharing among all 13 agencies in the SDG3 GAP, the accelerator working groups were set up to provide support to countries. These working groups learn from each other and harmonise approaches across the accelerator's thematic areas. An important aspect of the accelerators working groups is push for aligning support towards financing equitable access to PHC for achieving UHC. Table 2 presents the different accelerator working groups. More information on the SDG3 GAP accelerator working groups can be found here.

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Table 2: SDG3 GAP Accelerator working group

Accelerator working group thematic area	Co-leads	Overall focus
Primary Health Care	UNICEF and WHO	Supporting countries to develop and deliver a comprehensive package of essential health services and contribute to UHC through PHC, using the PHC operational framework and the PHC monitoring framework and indicators as key tools to accelerate progress
Sustainable Financing for Health	Gavi, Global Fund and World Bank	Sustaining health financing and prioritizing for equity while responding to COVID-19 and building back better
Fragile and vulnerable settings/disease outbreaks	WFP and WHO	Making PHC work in fragile settings and enhancing the humanitarian/ development nexus
Determinants of health, community/civil society engagement, gender equality (equity cluster)	UNAIDS, UNDP and UN Women	Driving equity in the COVID-19 response and recovery including addressing gender inequities, with a focus on vaccine equity and gender-responsive vaccine access and uptake
Research and development, innovation and access	WHO	Scale-up of innovations including medical oxygen, COVID-19 digital innovations, women and children's health and mental health
Data and Digital health	UNFPA and WHO	Strengthening country data and information systems, especially with regard to disaggregated data, including application to COVID-19 and equity

2.3

UHC 2030

The UHC 2030 is a partnership aimed at creating a movement for accelerating equitable and sustainable progress towards universal health coverage (UHC). UHC 2030 provides a platform for private sector, civil society, international organizations, academia and governmental organizations to collaborate together at global and country level for accelerating equitable and sustainable progress towards universal health coverage (UHC) and health systems strengthening. UHC 2030 gathers diverse voices and perspectives to sustain stakeholders commitments around UHC. This implies UHC 2030 connects and works with different stakeholders to foster political and financial commitments for UHC. More information about the UHC 2030 can be obtained from here.

Box 2: UHC 2030 key principles

UHC 2030 key principles

Making health systems everybody's business – with engagement of citizens, communities, civil society and private sector

Evidence-based national health strategies and leadership, with government stewardship to ensure availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of service delivery

International cooperation based on mutual learning across countries regardless of development status and progress in achieving and sustaining UHC, and development effectiveness principles

Transparency and accountability for results

Leaving no one behind: a commitment to equity, non-discrimination and a rights-based approach

2.4

Accessing resources to facilitate collaborations using a primary health care lens

WHO Country focal points and Ministry of Health staff collaborating and engaging with these different global health partnerships could make use of the Primary Health Care for Global Health Initiatives Toolbox (PHC-GHI Toolbox) in accessing resources to guide planning and engagements with the partnerships using a primary health care lens.

The Toolbox (Figure 1) contains:

GHI Overviews & Case Studies

Three additional overviews for Gavi, the Global Fund and GFF. These overviews provide direction on optimization of proposals to support effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The 27 case studies demonstrate application of PHC strategies to GHI supported efforts in different settings.

Health Systems Strengthening Investment Database

Provides detailed qualitative and quantitative historic data on HSS investments by Gavi and Global Fund, organized by country and by WHO Health System Building blocks.

PHC-GHI Resource Database

Contains resources and relevant questions that could be used during the proposal development process to ensure alignment with PHC Operational Framework levers and the PHC Approach.

PHC-GHI Focal Point Directory

Provides a comprehensive list of Focal Points for several major GHIs and relevant WHO Technical focal points across all three levels of WHO.

COVID-19 Funding Rapid Assessment

Supports countries in identifying priority areas for inclusion of PHC activities into existing or upcoming funding proposals centered around COVID-19.

Figure 1: Primary health care toolbox

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