

Human Resources for Health Management Toolkit

Developed to assist managers in day-to-day HR management

Module 8: Effective Human Resources Teams



Partnership for Reviving Routine
Immunisation in Northern Nigeria;
Maternal Newborn and Child Health Initiative

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Acknowledgement

Human resource management is key to providing quality health care services. The understanding of the dynamics and management of human resources is the bedrock around which service delivery revolves.

The PRRINN-MNCH programme has over the last 7 years been actively involved in several ways to solve the challenges of managing human resources in the 4 states of its operations (Jigawa, Katsina, Yobe and Zamfara). This manual is one of the modest efforts by the programme to support states to address the challenges of human resource management.

In the course of its work, the programme realised that human resource management, as a distinct work stream, has been lumped together with personnel management. This has led to the neglect of key human resources activities and its attendant effect of overall performance and management of human resources. This manual therefore provides key managers with the basic step-by-step process of managing human resources.

During the development of this manual, several individuals have contributed to this final document. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Consultants led by Michael Siebert; State Teams under the leadership of the STMs; State Stakeholders led by Permanent Secretarie and Office of the Head of Service in Jigawa, Katsina, Yobe and Zamfara States. The Directors of Personnel Management and members of the respective states Human Resources for Health Coordinating Committees have all played significant role in refining this document and its adoption by the states. Also worthy of mention is the Programme's HR LECs who have been responsible for the day-to-day follow up in the development of the manual.

It is my hope and prayers that Human Resources Units of the respective states SMOH and other agencies will utilise this document to improve the quality of their work.

I would also like to acknowledge the funding for this document by UK and Norwegian Government through DFID.

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PRRINN-MNCH

Human Resources for Health Management Toolkit

Foreword

This *Human Resources for Health* Management Toolkit is a step-by-step guide for health planners and managers to improve planning and management of human resources (HR), for the health system as a whole and within health facilities. It aims to help address some of the acute problems from shortages of skilled, experienced health workers.

The HRH toolkit is partly the output of PRRINN-MNCH in northern Nigeria, the Partnership for Reviving Routine Immunisation in Northern Nigeria /Maternal Newborn and Child Health programme funded by the UK Government and State Department of the Norwegian Government for the benefit of the Nigerian people. Many staff and officials in the states where PRRINN-MNCH works and team members of PRRINN-MNCH have helped to develop and test this toolkit – their contributions are gratefully acknowledged. The output is also the result of ongoing collaboration in a number of countries between health professionals of Health Partners International and Health Partners Southern Africa.

PRRINN-MNCH works with federal, state and local governments and local communities to improve the quality and availability of maternal, newborn and child health care.

This management toolkit does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the UK Government, the Nigerian Government or any of the state governments with which we work. However we hope it will provide useful, practical assistance and guidance for human resources managers in their work.

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February 2014

Preface

In any developing public health sector HR forms the foundation of health care service delivery. The key however is making sure that Ministries of Health have the right people with the right skills in the right positions in the right number at the right places. In Northern Nigeria the scenario is no different. In an effort to achieve this, PRRINN-MNCH embarked on a process of strengthening the HR function within the ministries through initiatives such as establishing HR Units with clearly defined objectives and responsibilities. These HR Units however needed basic step-by-step guidance as to not only to administrate HR but to comprehensively and effectively do HR Planning, HR Management and HR Development. Facing the shortage of qualified HR practitioners, the Human Resources for Health (HRH) Toolkit was developed from a wide range of sources to provide a reference document to assist HR officers and managers with HR related functions.

This toolkit is not all-inclusive and covers the key aspects around HR within the Northern Nigerian context and is aimed at addressing the basic elements of HR. Although Northern Nigeria is unique with specific challenges around HR management, planning and development, the basic principles of HR remains the same. The Toolkit therefore applies academic/theoretical HR methodologies and approaches into day-to-day actions.

The HRM Toolkit consists of 10 Modules as listed below.

Module 1: HR Planning

Strategic HR planning predicts the future HR management needs of the health services after analyzing the current human resources, the external labour market and the future HR environment that the MoH will be operating in. The analysis of HR management issues external to the organization and developing scenarios about the future are what distinguishes strategic planning from operational planning. The basic questions to be answered for strategic planning are: Where are we going with health services and how does that impact HR? How will we develop HR strategies to successfully get there, given the circumstances? What skill sets do we need?

Module 2: HR Management & Risk Management

Ministries with good governance practices clearly establish the division of authority and accountability among the senior management, HR director and line managers. The role of the senior management is governance and the role of the HR director is management. Sometimes the roles can get hazy. In clarifying whose job it is, the senior management and the HR director must always keep in mind the legal responsibilities and liabilities as the employer.

Module 3: Recruitment & Retention

Making sure you recruit well is so important. Committed, motivated, qualified employees help your ministry achieve its purpose. Health service providers cannot afford to be short-staffed. Limited financial resources mean that hiring mistakes can be a huge financial burden. Hiring the wrong person is a poor use of resources for recruiting and orienting a new staff member. Having clearly defined recruitment process and procedures prevents costly recruiting mistakes. Repairing the damage can take a lot of time and effort.

Module 4: HR Performance Management

Performance management is a process by which managers, supervisors and employees work together to plan, monitor and review an employee's work objectives and overall contribution to the ministry. More than just an annual performance review, performance management is the continuous process of setting objectives, assessing progress and providing on-going coaching and feedback to ensure that employees are meeting their objectives and career goals.

Module 5: HR Discipline

Clear expectation, appropriate supervision and feedback on a day-to-day basis are the best ways to avoid the necessity of implementing a discipline process as outlined below. However, when problems with behaviour or performance occur, discipline is necessary. By implementing a discipline process, you provide employees with an opportunity to become a productive part of your Ministry and you make any termination more defensible.

Module 6: Employment Termination

Termination is an action taken by the Ministry to end the employer/employee relationship. Ministries have a basic right to terminate the employment of an employee, but along with that right comes responsibilities. Employers must comply with the employment/labour standards and human rights legislation for their jurisdiction and beyond that, employers must treat employees fairly and in good faith.

Module 7: Diversity in the workplace

Building and sustaining diversity in Ministries can only be achieved by planning and design. It is therefore increasingly important to address how to support diverse, inclusive workplaces. What does a diverse inclusive work environment look like? How do we tangibly encourage and support diversity so that all people feel welcome within our workplaces irrespective of their gender, disability or race? When people feel welcome and safe from discrimination and harassment they are more motivated and their performance will improve. Absenteeism and performance problems decrease while productivity, morale and employee retention increase.

Module 8: Effective HR Teams

Despite the daily onslaughts of e-mails, phone calls and memos, meetings are still one of the most effective ways that people share and exchange information, get feedback, plan, collaborate and make important decisions for their ministries. So why do meetings have such a negative impact? Meetings seem to be getting longer, more frequent and generating fewer results. This can result in employees becoming frustrated as they feel that meetings are taking them away from, rather than adding value to their work. Ministries can increase the effectiveness of their team through effective communication, management of conflict and setting-up work teams.

Module 9: HR Training & Development

The changes in the public sector has had an impact on workplace learning. Think of the current positions in your ministry and the need for increased competence in change management, financial management, service delivery management, and so forth. Change also puts the spotlight on training and education as a means of equipping health workers with the tools they need to adapt to changing health skill requirements, organizational change and increasing complexity in the external public health environment.

Module 10: HR Information System

Computers have simplified the task of analysing vast amounts of data, and they can be invaluable aids in HR management, planning and development, from payroll processing to record retention. With computer hardware, software, and databases, Ministries can keep records and information better, as well as retrieve them easier and quicker. HRIS (Human Resources Information System) is an integrated system designed to provide information used in HR decision making. The HRAdmin software was developed and implemented in the four PRINN-MNCH states. This module provides end-users with the know-how of utilising the system to its full potential.

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1. Effective Meetings

Despite the daily onslaughts of e-mails, phone calls and memos, meetings are still one of the most effective ways that people share and exchange information, get feedback, plan, collaborate and make important decisions for their ministries.

So why do meetings have such a bad reputation? Meetings seem to be getting longer, more frequent and generating fewer results. This can result in employees becoming frustrated as they feel that meetings are taking them away from, rather than adding value to their work.

The fact is, that although many of us complain about them, we can all expect to spend a significant amount of our working time in meetings. So why not learn to convene meaningful and productive meetings? In this section, practical ideas are presented on how you can improve the quality and effectiveness of the various meetings you find yourself in.

1.1 Meet regularly

We are increasingly spending time alone at the workplace since much of our work is done on the computer. With schedules becoming increasingly tighter, it can be challenging to schedule opportunities for face-to-face time with colleagues. When people experience stress as various deadlines loom, often the first thing to get pushed aside is the staff meeting. Do the opposite! Bring people together, even for 15 minutes, to get people talking and problem solving together. It can be surprising how a quick meeting can help alleviate stress and re-energize the group.

Regular staff meetings can serve to remind employees that there is more going on than their own issues and deadlines and may see opportunities for mutual support and collaboration, let alone obtain vital information from each other. Another benefit of holding regular staff meetings is to create an opportunity for different layers of the ministry (managers, employees, interns, contractors) to align around current priorities and organizational goals. A common complaint is that employees don't have enough access to information. Regular staff meetings can mitigate this. As for managers, it is a great way to touch base with your staff and get a "snapshot" about how your staff is doing.

1.2 Planning meetings

An effective meeting has a purpose and gets finished in the time allotted. Before you call a meeting, ask yourself:

- ✓ Is this meeting necessary?

Weigh the pros and cons of holding this meeting. A good meeting yields many results; a bad meeting is a waste of time.

- ✓ What do I want to achieve?

Share information? Make decisions? Gather ideas? Connect with others? Get a sense of where the organization is at? All of the above? You may have several items on the agenda that each require a different output. Be clear what each item needs.

- ✓ Who needs to be there to achieve it?

Consider staff size, does everyone need to be at this meeting?

What if someone cannot make the staff meeting, do you proceed with the meeting?

For staff meetings, keep it at a consistent time of the week and don't cancel unless less than 50% of your staff can attend.

If a member is absent in a task team or project team meeting, you might not be able to proceed given that you need content expertise to go forward – so make this decision using common sense.

- ✓ Do I have the physical space and materials to run a meeting?

Note: meetings can also be online, with video or by phone.

- ✓ Is the timing right?
- ✓ Will the right people be able to attend? Have you considered various schedules?

Once the objective(s) has been clearly stated and the participants selected, make sure to communicate this prior to the meeting so that they can prepare in advance. This simple step will assure that the meeting can benefit all parties involved and accomplish its goal. In busy work environments, we can forget that the participants have as much responsibility to make meetings time-efficient and effective as the person conducting the meeting.

Creating an effective agenda is fundamental in planning a productive meeting. Here are some reasons why the meeting agenda is so important.

- ✓ Provides a list of topics for discussion
- ✓ Assigns a presenter or discussion leader for each topic
- ✓ Provides a structure for the meeting (how long to spend on which topics)
- ✓ Can be used as a checklist to ensure that all information is covered
- ✓ Provides a focus for the meeting (the objective of the meeting must be clearly stated in the agenda)

Ultimately, you want to give participants an opportunity to come to the meeting prepared for the upcoming discussions or decisions. It can be a great tool to increase engagement and motivation from your colleagues as well as accountability to the objectives of the meeting.

There are two options in compiling a meeting agenda:

- ✓ Provide a pre-established agenda for the participants to follow and consider
- ✓ Develop the agenda with the key participants in the meeting.

When deciding which approach works best for your ministry, consider your objectives, time available and communication processes that are in place. The meeting organizer can take on the role of synthesizing the additions and changes into a finished document for the group to work from.

1.2.1 Checklist for developing agendas

- ✓ Think of what overall outcome you want from the meeting and what activities need to occur to reach that outcome. The agenda should be organized so that these activities are conducted during the meeting.
- ✓ In the agenda, state the overall outcome that you want from the meeting.
- ✓ Next to each major topic, include the type of action needed, the type of output expected (decision, vote, action assigned to someone), and time estimates for addressing each topic.
- ✓ Don't overly design meetings; be open to adapting the meeting agenda if members are making progress in the planning process.
- ✓ Think about how you frame an event so people come in with that mindset. It may pay to have a short discussion around the title to develop a common mindset among attendees.
- ✓ Of course, the most important part of creating an effective agenda is to follow it during the meeting.

When the agenda has been set, and you have a basic structure to work from, the next step in this planning process is to consider how this agenda will be implemented and goals accomplished. Meetings often work better if a facilitator is assigned to run the meeting. They make sure that all goes smoothly, that everyone has a chance to speak, that timelines and procedures are followed and that, if possible, everybody leaves the room satisfied.

1.3 Facilitating meetings

Facilitation is about process (how you do something) – rather than content (what you do). Having an assigned facilitator during your meeting can help the group keep to its task while simultaneously paying attention to personal needs of each group member.

If the same participants meet regularly, which is common in small organizations, consider rotating roles so that everyone gets a chance to acquire and develop their meeting facilitation skills.

1.3.1 Five key elements of facilitating meetings

Element 1: **Opening** – frame the meeting by reviewing the agenda and clarifying roles

Element 2: **Establishing ground rules** – how will you work together

Element 3: **Time management** – keep track of time to ensure all agenda items are covered and tasks are completed

Element 4: **Evaluation** of the meeting – get feedback to improve meeting process

Element 5: **Closing** –clarify and review actions and commitment of employees

1.3.2 Supporting key facilitation considerations

- ✓ Keep things visible so that everyone is on the same page. Simply writing the agenda on a flip chart or white board keeps things public. Having handouts of the agenda is fine but can waste paper and gets individuals studying the agenda versus looking and listening to one another.
- ✓ Make things clear by clarifying points, paraphrasing, synthesizing and confirming.
- ✓ Capture decisions made or next steps on the flip chart or white board. Again, everyone making their own notes is acceptable but can also lead to confusion later if people heard different things.
- ✓ Be clear on what you are asking for: clarification? A decision? An idea? Information sharing? Information seeking?
- ✓ Create space for all voices to be heard.

If you want to capture notes from the meeting in addition to what is taken down publicly, assign a note taker for the meeting.

The main purpose of having a facilitator at the meeting is to create an environment of transparency and purpose. Having effective meetings is an art as well as a science and it may take some practice and experimentation before your ministry finds its own way of working together. By allowing for a quick evaluation of the meeting to occur at the end, you can learn about what works and what needs to be changed for next time.

Not every body likes meetings - It's easy for people with strong personalities to drown out others during a meeting. Some people need time to reflect on what they've heard - or absorb information better by reading the minutes of a meeting - and may

have more to say after a meeting. Remember, not everyone has the same way of learning or interacting with others. Try to take these varying needs and styles into account.

1.3.3 Evaluating meetings

This can be a crucial and quick step to dramatically improve your meetings each week. Conduct a quick check by asking:

- ✓ What worked with this meeting?
- ✓ What can we do differently next time?

The evaluation is not the time to debate what people said. Ask for clarifications or solutions as to how to handle a particular part of the meeting next time. Allow the feedback to flow. It will help people feel heard, improve your process, reduce frustration and create hope that meetings will continue to evolve. When conducting an evaluation, be mindful to integrate the suggestions, decision and/or feedback received into future meetings. People will stop providing feedback in meetings if they don't see that their feedback is being considered or used.

2. Communication

Effective communication, in other words, to be understood and understand others, is a set of skills to be learned and practiced. In this section, you will consider the common misconceptions many of us hold about the art of communicating as well as the importance of self-awareness in communication. Moreover, you will learn some essential skills in sending and receiving messages.

2.1 Common perceptions about communication

It is fairly common for two people not to understand each other. Often, without even knowing it, we hold certain perceptions about how to communicate with one another. These perceptions create barriers to engaging in effective exchange and genuine conversation. Below is a list of the common perceptions we can hold about communication. Take a look and see where your snare might be. By becoming more aware of your own "habits of mind" about communication could help increase your effectiveness at work.

Perception	Explanation
"If I say it, the other person will understand."	Not necessarily. Meaning is ascribed by the receiver of a message, so saying it doesn't mean it will be understood. We need to check to see if the meaning of our message is understood as intended.
"The more communication, the better!"	If you are feeling misunderstood, talking too much and louder is a mistake. This can actually exacerbate a situation versus clarify it. Excessive talking won't help. Try different ways of expressing yourself. Knowing when to remain silent is part of communicating effectively.
"Any problem can be solved at any time if we communicate with each other."	There are times when taking some time away from each other and the situation can be a better solution than trying to talk it out. Often high intensity emotions such as anger or sadness can blow an interaction out of proportion. A few moments of self-reflection and calm can help you gain perspective on the issue.
"Communication is a natural ability – some have it, some don't."	Communication is not an innate ability. Skillful communication can be learned with practice. There are some very simple tips that can dramatically increase how you understand others and are understood. Try them out and see for yourself if anything changes.
(Adapted from Johnson, Reaching Out, 2003)	

2.2 Effective Communication

Communication amongst people is a process in which everyone receives, sends, interprets, and infers all at the same time, and there is no beginning and end. How

do you send messages effectively? Taking into account your own internal states, what can you do to ensure effective communication of your ideas and feeling?

- ✓ Use "I" statements. Powerful and influential statements are made when a person uses personal pronouns when speaking. It contributes to direct communication. Simply say what you think or feel about something. "I feel frustrated when people are late to meetings" versus "Some people may think that people who come late to meetings are passive aggressive".
- ✓ Describe behaviours without judgment or an evaluative statement. "You interrupted me several times during our staff meeting" versus "you are an attention-seeker and have no care for others".
- ✓ Describe your feelings: this is an important part of the message that often gets skipped even though the emotional content is directly coloring your message. Best to just name it so that others can understand what is going on for you. For instance, "I felt angry when you cut me off during our staff meeting."
- ✓ Maintain congruence between your verbal and non-verbal messages. Saying, "I enjoyed your presentation to the board.." with your eyes rolling or a sarcastic tone, will confuse the person and most likely decrease trust which closes communication down. Your body language accounts for more than 60% of your message - verbal and physical congruence will build trust and clarify your intent.
- ✓ For many people it will take practice to become an effective communicator. Ask for feedback around the clarity, delivery, and timing of your message. It might feel risky but each small risk will build your confidence and increase trust in those you work with.

2.3 Listening and responding

Too often in our conversations, we talk to each other but don't listen attentively. We are often distracted, half listening, half thinking about something else or formulating an answer.

Listening and responding is how we understand the feelings and thoughts of the other person. There is no skill more important for effective communication than taking into consideration the other person's perspective. Try standing in someone else's shoes; it will considerably improve your communication with that person.

2.3.1 Tips for listening and responding

- ✓ Focus on what is being said – tune out distractions
- ✓ Look for non-verbal cues such as eye contact, facial expressions or body postures
- ✓ Listening is about the other, not you. Try to refrain from forming your response before you have even heard what the other is saying

- ✓ Clarify and ask pointed questions to help you understand what is being said
- ✓ Paraphrase: restate in your own words, what the person says, feels and means
- ✓ Try to understand the message from the sender's perspective: "So if I understand you."

3. Productive Work Teams

Think about all the people that you come into contact with in your work life: colleagues, other ministries and other volunteers, donors, patients, the general public and so on. With this large network of people connected to your organization, learning how to work well together is vital.

3.1 Developing work teams

Teamwork originates with, and builds relationships among, a group of people who share a common interest or purpose. Working in teams allows individuals from different areas (e.g. programs, fund raising, marketing) with different roles (staff, volunteer, client/consumer/customer) and perhaps from different organizations to work together on issues of interest to team members.

A team focuses its work on common objectives and finding solutions to shared problems. It uses formal processes such as record keeping, facilitation and scheduled meetings to achieve its objectives. An effective team will:

- ✓ Retain valuable organizational knowledge that comes with the continuity of staff and sharing of information
- ✓ Enhance the power and feeling of satisfaction of individuals working on the team
- ✓ Establish trust relationships that lead to better sharing of knowledge and understanding
- ✓ Achieve objectives because individuals are working together
- ✓ Hold team members accountable to one another
- ✓ Combine the talents of many individuals and therefore contribute more than the sum of its parts
- ✓ Create an environment where the input from people at all levels is valued
- ✓ Create new knowledge through working and learning with others
- ✓ Provide a process and place for multiple perspectives to be applied to complex problems and issues
- ✓ Generate new ideas and insights
- ✓ Turn knowledge into practical results that improve the organization's services

- ✓ Use a variety of communication processes (including technology) to support the sharing of information, knowledge and experience
- ✓ Create a climate where innovation and new ideas are supported and members listen to diverse points of view
- ✓ Multiply impacts while maintaining or reducing the resources needed to do the job
- ✓ Promote a culture that questions the status quo and looks for innovative ways to improve services and reach goals
- ✓ Empower individuals, the team and the organizations

3.2 Building successful work teams and groups

3.2.1 Set clear objectives

What do you want the team to achieve? Consider the potential roadblocks and opportunities and be realistic about how a team will help you find solutions. Make sure that all team members are aware of the objectives and how the team will reach them (and don't forget to celebrate when the team achieves a milestone!). Identifying a team leader can help the group stay on task.

3.2.2 Identify and Establish team members

Once you know your objectives you can decide who needs to be involved on the team. Consider whether you need to include staff members, board members, volunteers and/or clients/ or other stakeholders. Choose people who have a good understanding of the issue. You may also want to include people who have limited knowledge because they will bring new perspectives and ideas and will learn from this process. Also consider politics. Who is connected to management or leadership? Who can clear the way of organizational obstacles? Who gets along with whom? Who will be disruptive or uncooperative? Don't be afraid to add new members as the process continues.

3.2.3 Establish a time frame for completion of the team's work

Ensure that the timeframe setting is aligned with or appropriate to the quantity of work. Remember that group work can often take longer than individual work.

3.2.4 Empower the team to work well together

Be sure the team members have the skills and resources they need to work well together - for example, facilitation skills, finances, support staff, executive support, access to technology and the skills to use it.

3.2.5 Establish communication between members

You will need to establish a process for the team to report on its efforts and results. The team will have to establish how they will communicate among themselves and how they will communicate their work to others (for example, minutes of meetings, e-mail and, web site).

3.2.6 More helpful tips

- ✓ Effective teams need to focus on both the group and the task
- ✓ All team members need a clear sense of their collective task
- ✓ Encourage team members to set and take ownership of goals
- ✓ Write down and regularly promote the group's task so everyone remains focused
- ✓ If individual conflicts arise, review and negotiate them in terms of the task that needs to be completed
- ✓ Encourage all team members to participate
- ✓ Keep a written record of group decisions to avoid returning to the same discussion
- ✓ Establish group norms that everyone feels comfortable with and hold group members accountable
- ✓ Handle feedback and debate fairly and look for alternative strategies that still fit with the group's task
- ✓ Recognize group effort instead of individual effort
- ✓ Focus on solutions - it's easy to identify the problem but more positive to focus on finding a solution
- ✓ Be mindful of verbal and non-verbal communication
- ✓ Affirm the importance of keeping commitments made to the group and by the group
- ✓ Have clear expectations and communicate them throughout the group
- ✓ Recognize positive contributions to the group
- ✓ Affirm that constructive conflict is ok but personal attacks are not
- ✓ Provide training in problem solving and conflict management to group members

Human Resources for Health Toolkit

This toolkit helps you to get the most out of your investment in human resources for health. You need to plan and manage your human resources actively, ensuring optimal efficiency.

This toolkit shows you how.

People form the foundation of health care service delivery. Thus it makes financial sense to manage these valuable resources to ensure that:

- The right people with the right skills need to be available in the right number at the right place to do the right job
- Timely and accurate data on availability and distribution of health workers is accessible for informed decision making

The Modules

1. **HR Planning**
2. **HR Management & Risk Management**
3. **Recruitment & Retention**
4. **HR Performance Management**
5. **HR Discipline**
6. **Employment Termination**
7. **Diversity in the workplace**
8. **Effective HR Teams**
9. **HR Training & Development**
10. **HR Information System**

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