Deep Dive – Community Engagement

Community Engagement

Community engagement is the inclusion of local health system users and community resources in all aspects of health planning, provision, and governance. Community engagement is a central component of local priority setting and ensures that services are appropriately tailored to population needs and values. However, local priority setting is only one activity where community engagement is necessary, and engagement can be incorporated into many aspects of a health system. The WHO has defined community engagement as “a process of developing relationships that enable stakeholders to work together to address health-related issues and promote well-being to achieve positive health impact and outcomes.”
Community Engagement is a component of Population Health Management

System

- Governance & Leadership
  - Primary Health Care Policies
  - Quality Management Infrastructure
  - Social Accountability
- Health Financing
  - Payment Systems
  - Spending on Primary Health Care
  - Financial Coverage
- Adjustment to Population Health Needs
  - Surveillance
  - Priority Setting
  - Innovation & Learning
- Drugs & Supplies
- Facility Infrastructure
- Information Systems
- Workforce
- Funds

Inputs

- Population Health Management
  - Local Priority Setting
  - Community Engagement
  - Empowerment
  - Proactive Population Outreach
- Facility Organization & Management
  - Team-based Care Organization
  - Facility Management Capability & Leadership
  - Information Systems Use
  - Performance Measurement & Management Outreach

Service Delivery

- Access
  - Financial
  - Geographic
  - Timeliness
- Availability of Effective PHC Services
  - Provider Availability
  - Provider Competence
  - Provider Motivation
  - Patient-provider Respect & Trust
  - Safety

Outputs

- High Quality Primary Health Care
  - First Contact Accessibility
  - Continuity
  - Comprehensiveness
  - Coordination
  - Person-centered
- Effective Service Coverage
  - Health Promotion
  - Disease Prevention
  - RMNCH
  - Childhood Illness
  - Infectious Disease
  - NCDs & Mental Health
  - Palliative Care

Outcomes

- Health Status
- Responsiveness to People
- Equity
- Efficiency
- Resilience of Health Systems

Social Determinants & Context (Political, Social, Demographic & Socioeconomic)
Community Engagement is a component of Population Health Management

Population Health Management
- Local priority setting
- Community engagement
- Empanelment
- Proactive population outreach

Local Priority Setting

Community Engagement

Empanelment

Proactive Population Outreach
What can you learn about Community Engagement from the Improvement Strategies?

**SECTION 1**

What is Community Engagement?

What it is: Learn more about the core principles and goals of Community Engagement and its role in PHC improvement.

**SECTION 2**

How do I assess my performance?

What it is: Learn more about some indications that improvements might be relevant in your context and what you can achieve by focusing improvements on Community Engagement.

Vital Signs Profile: Use the information in your Vital Signs Profile to help determine relevant areas for improvement.

**SECTION 3**

How do I get started?

What others have done: Learn from implementation approaches and challenges in other country contexts.

How to succeed: Consider your country context, what elements are not functioning properly, and what needs to be in place to support effective improvements.

What to ask: Use guiding questions to help determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms in your country context.

Guided by the above considerations and relevant resources, start to build out an improvement plan with your CE lead and/or focal point.
What can my country achieve by focusing on Community Engagement?

**Goals & Outcomes**

- Community engagement is a critical function and enabler of strong primary health care systems.

- When done effectively, community engagement helps to ensure that the design, planning, governance, and delivery of health care services appropriately meet the needs of communities they are designed to serve. This can help systems to achieve:
  - Effective local priority setting
  - Positive health impact and outcomes
  - Stronger patient-provider respect and trust
  - Person-centered services
  - Increased utilization of care by the community
Learn more about whether you should focus on Community Engagement in the Vital Signs Profile.
How do I assess my performance?

Use the information in the **Vital Signs Profile** to help determine relevant **areas of improvement**
How do I assess my performance?

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How do I assess my performance?

Use the information in the Vital Signs Profile to help determine relevant areas of improvement.
What are other indications that Community Engagement might be an appropriate area of focus?

**Other Indications**

- **Lack of community engagement systems and groups**
  Mechanisms or processes to solicit feedback and address issues raised by community members are inconsistent, inaccessible, or not in place.

- **Lack of contextualization and adaptation of health services**
  The design and delivery of health services do not respect local needs and preferences and are not grounded in local data.

- **Poor information sharing**
  Important data are not shared with communities in a transparent and accessible manner or no formal mechanisms to disseminate data exist.

- **Insufficient stakeholder engagement**
  Diverse community stakeholders voices are excluded or under-valued in health planning, provision, and governance activities.
Learn more about the core principles of Community Engagement and what you can achieve by focusing improvements in the **What it is** section.
What is Community Engagement?

Community Engagement is “a process of developing relationships that enable stakeholders to work together to address health-related issues and promote well-being to achieve positive health impact and outcomes.”

Community Engagement is a central component of local priority setting and ensures that services are appropriately tailored to population health needs and values.

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What is Community Engagement?

Why it’s important

Community-based planning
Establishes a process for soliciting and incorporating community input in the planning, governance, and implementation of primary health care to help ensure that services align with local priorities.

Transparency and accountability
Community engagement creates resources and communication channels to invite community feedback, ensure transparency, and strengthen the accountability of the health facility to the community and the public.

Respectful, accessible care
Provides a platform for understanding the voices, opinions, and expertise of end users – which can support the design and planning of health services more acceptable, accessible, and appropriate to the communities they serve.

What is Community engagement?

Community Engagement is “a process of developing relationships that enable stakeholders to work together to address health-related issues and promote well-being to achieve positive health impact and outcomes.”

Community Engagement is a central component of local priority setting and ensures that services are appropriately tailored to population health needs and values.

Central considerations

Where and when to integrate Community Engagement
Community Engagement should be integrated into all aspects of health design, planning, governance, and delivery. Key areas where Community Engagement can be embedded to support better engagement between health systems and communities include:

- Situational assessment and analysis
- Agenda setting and planning
- Designing context-specific approaches
- Defining key roles and responsibilities

How to integrate Community Engagement
Formal systems must be implemented to catalyze effective engagement, including mechanisms to encourage, solicit, and respond to community members’ concerns, suggestions, and needs. Some common platforms include:

- Village health committees
- Community advisory boards
- Patient and family advisory councils
- Community meetings and feedback forms at facilities

Community Engagement: The active and continual solicitation and incorporation of community input in the planning, governance, and implementation of primary health care.

A RANGE OF ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS
Create resources and communication channels to invite community feedback and ensure transparency.

Respectful, accessible care
While there is no single best way to engage communities, a range of methods are available for health systems to facilitate Community Engagement. This continuum includes simple, passive mechanisms to solicit feedback such as suggestion boxes or complaint lines as well as more active methods such as community ownership, sign-off, and decision-making.

While deeper community engagement yields the most person-centered services, it may be helpful for health systems to begin by implementing more basic forms of engagement and planning strategies for scaling to more active engagement.
Community Engagement – How do I get started?

Derive information from **What others have done**, **What to ask** and **How to succeed** to help determine where and how you might begin to plan and enact forms in your country context.
Planning for improvement in your context

The guidance and recommendations described within the Community Engagement module are not intended to provide a one-size-fits-all solution.

The considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

Sample activities

- **Consider** implementation challenges and approaches in other country contexts

- **Consider how the features of your health system**, such as how decisions get made and the role of the private sector, will impact your improvement plans

- **Identify** key elements that need to be in place to support improvements

- **Use the guiding questions in the Improvement Strategies** to spur thinking about Community Engagement in your country context and stimulate ideas for improvement

- **Start to develop** an improvement plan
Planning for improvement in your context

While the **specific considerations** involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your **context**, you might consider...

What are some factors that impact effective community engagement?

- Staff time and resources
- Facility management capability and leadership
- Governance and social accountability mechanisms
- Cost of interventions
- Population specific limitations to participation such as gender, culture, race etc.
Learn from what others have done

Health Care Reform | Kerala, India
Establishing community participation and decision-making power in local health systems

Community-based Health and Planning Services Program | Ghana
Integrating community-engagement activities into health reform plans
Kerala, India: At-a-glance context

- South India
- Lower-Middle Income
- Multiple languages
## India: At-a-glance context

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<td>66%</td>
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Learn from what others have done: Kerala, India

Why reforms were needed

- In the 1980s, limited resources in the public sector led to policies that favored privatized health care.

- However, private health care was often expensive and unaffordable, with the poor spending up to 40% of their income on out-of-pocket payments to access care.

Approach

To improve care and access and revitalize public trust in the health system, the state government implemented the People's Campaign for Decentralized Planning movement.

Through this reform, Kerala decentralized a significant amount of power to local governments and brought PHC centers and their referring sub-centers under the jurisdiction of villages in order to engage more closely with the community. This system resulted in:

- Increased collaboration between providers and communities
- Active community engagement in local priority setting activities

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Learn from what others have done: Kerala

Strengths

- **Creates** channels to encourage community feedback decision-making power
- **Supports** the integration of community voices in health planning, provision, and governance activities
- **Helps ensure** that service delivery interventions reflect local health priorities
Learn from what others have done: Kerala

What supporting elements were in place?

- **Priority setting**: National priority setting processes are informed by community needs and support decision-making power at a district or local level.

- **Governance and leadership**: National policies and governance structures promote community engagement and help enable local stakeholders to implement systems for community engagement.

- **Patient provider respect and trust**: Collaborative relationships between providers and communities help ensure that community members are actively solicited for determining health priorities.
Ghana: At-a-glance context

- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Lower-Middle Income
- English-speaking country
Ghana: At-a-glance context

<table>
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<tr>
<th>GDP per capita ($PPP)</th>
<th>Human Development Index</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>$4,641</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>63</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Percentage of population living in rural areas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>28.8M</td>
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Learn from what others have done: Ghana

Rationale and why reforms were needed

- The CHPS initiative in Ghana was created in 1994 with the aim of reducing barriers to geographical access to health care
- CHPS is an evidence-based approach to providing community-based care to underserved populations
- The CHPS model is based on the premise that community engagement is both a critical function and enabler of strong primary health care systems

Approach

- Beginning in the 1990s, Ghana began integrating community engagement into all aspects of health reform plans
- As a part of the CHPS program, nurses, community health officers, and volunteers provide preventive, curative, and promotional services to communities in the catchment area of their “CHPS zone” and at community-based CHPS compounds
- To support effective community engagement, a Community Health Management Committee approved by the community and collect data on the specific needs, demographics, and customs of the community
- In addition, new community health officers and volunteers are introduced and approved by the community as they are selected
Learn from what others have done: Ghana

- **Diverse stakeholder engagement:** The inclusion of special interest groups and community members in priority exercises resulted in better identification of needs and priorities and the orientation of priorities to local needs.

- **Community empowerment:** The process increased community knowledge about priority setting.

- **Accessibility, trust, and transparency:** The process resulted in greater transparency, improved trust, and improved perceived accessibility of services.
Learn from what others have done: Ghana

- **Implementation challenges:** While 85% of districts had completed CHPS planning, only 30% engaged in community engagement and participation activities – in part due to a lack of understanding about this core component of the program. In these areas, health outcomes were worse than anticipated.

- **Shared vision and effective planning:** In places where all aspects of the program were implemented, both the community and health workers encouraged its spread, suggesting these activities were widely appreciated by the community once implemented and underscoring the importance of shared vision, effective planning, and stakeholder buy-in when scaling community engagement programs.

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Learn from what others have done: Ghana

- **Participatory and inclusive stakeholder engagement:** Effective community engagement depends on channels that invite diverse community input and ensure transparency.

- **Priority setting:** National and local priority setting agendas must make community engagement and participation activities a priority in order to ensure the successful implementation and scale of such programs.

- **Data collection and use:** Community engagement mechanisms collect and use quantitative and qualitative data to improve decision-making and planning.

What supporting elements were in place?
What elements should be in place to support effective improvements in Community Engagement?

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Social Determinants & Context (Political, Social, Demographic & Socioeconomic)
What elements should be in place to support effective improvements in Community Engagement?

**GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

National policies that are supportive of a population health management approach and promote community engagement and national systems for social accountability help enable local stakeholders to implement systems for community engagement.
What elements should be in place to support effective improvements in Community Engagement?

**System**
- Governance and Leadership
- ADJUSTMENT TO POPULATION HEALTH NEEDS

**Inputs**

**Service Delivery**

National priority setting processes that are supportive of the population health management approach and community engagement help aid in flexible decision making and the adaptation of services to local needs.
What elements should be in place to support effective improvements in Community Engagement?

**Strong facility leadership** is necessary to ensure that community engagement translates to actionable and tangible changes at the facility level.
The specific considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

The questions listed may be a useful starting place to determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms in your context.

Sample questions

☐ What are the current systems for and forms of community engagement, if any?
The specific considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

The questions listed may be a useful starting place to determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms in your context.

Sample questions

- What are the current systems for and forms of community engagement, if any?
- What systems are in place to share data and changes to the health system with the community in a transparent manner? What venues exist for information sharing?
The specific considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

The questions listed may be a useful starting place to determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms in your context.

Sample questions

☐ What are the current systems for and forms of community engagement, if any?

☐ What systems are in place to share data and changes to the health system with the community in a transparent manner? What venues exist for information sharing?

☐ What are the existing community groups (health committees, women’s groups, religious groups)?
Recap: Community Engagement

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A Range of Engagement Options
Create resources and communication channels to invite community feedback and ensure transparency.