Deep Dive – Priority Setting

Priority Setting

Priority setting is the process of effectively allocating limited resources to improve population health, making decisions based on a defined set of criteria.

**Diverse Stakeholders**

- Community
- Health Sector
- Non-Health Sector

**Evaluation Criteria**

- Cost Effectiveness Assessment
- User Needs & Preferences
- Service Delivery Evaluation
- Health & Disease Info

**Analysis**

- Prioritization Exercise

**Ranked Priorities**

- Priority Needs
- Priority Interventions

**Transparent and Participatory Process**
Priority Setting is a component of Adjustment to Population Health Needs
Surveillance is a component of Adjustment to Population Health Needs

Adjustment to Population Health Needs
- Innovation & Learning
- Priority Setting
- Surveillance

Innovation & Learning

Priority Setting

Surveillance
What can you learn about Priority Setting from the Improvement Strategies?

**SECTION 1**

**What is Priority Setting?**

**What it is:** Learn more about the core principles and goals of Priority Setting 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 Priority Setting.

**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 Priority Setting?

Goals & Outcomes

✓ Effective priority setting is central to building resilient health systems that can effectively adapt and respond to changing population health needs and demands.
Priority Setting – How do I assess my performance?

Learn more about whether you should focus on Priority Setting in the Vital Signs Profile
Use the information in the Vital Signs Profile to help determine relevant areas of improvement.
How do I assess my performance?

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

Other Indications

- Data are not consistently used to set health priorities at the national and sub-national level for burden of disease, user needs and preferences, service delivery evaluations, and cost effectiveness.

- Stakeholder engagement does not occur or does not systematically occur for priority setting exercises.

- Allocation of resources is rarely based on results of the priority setting exercise or not at all.
Learn more about the core principles of Priority Setting and what you can achieve by focusing improvements in the **What it is** section.
What is Priority Setting?

Priority Setting, is the process of making decisions about how best to allocate limited resources to improve population health.

Priority setting is a complex and inherently political process involving a diverse array of stakeholders, decision-makers, and actors whose motivations and actions are often imperfectly aligned.
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Why it’s important

- **Implements** transparency through a clear process that invites and manages feedback from those involved.

- **Ensures** collaboration among stakeholders and representation of population health needs.

- **Establishes** an explicit process to incorporate values and context into priority setting.
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Key steps and considerations

- **Stakeholder engagement**
  Establish a systematic and multisectoral process so that priority setting is participatory and inclusive.

- **Criteria for priority setting**
  Outline measures before the priority setting process to determine which health problems should be made the priority.

- **Situational analysis**
  Use data and evidence to establish existing and emerging needs.

- **Priority setting process**
  Produce a priority list ranked by what is the most important, based on the established criteria.

- **Priorities into action**
  Translate priorities into the strategic and operational plans for the health sector, followed by costing and budgeting, implementation, and finally, monitoring and evaluation.
Priority Setting

Priority setting is the process of effectively allocating limited resources to improve population health, making decisions based on a defined set of criteria.

**ADJUSTMENT TO POPULATION HEALTH NEEDS INCLUDES...**

- **Community**
- **Health Sector**
- **Non-Health Sector**

**DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS**

**EVALUATION CRITERIA**

**ANALYSIS**

- Health & Disease Info
- Service Delivery Evaluation
- Cost Effectiveness Assessment
- User Needs & Preferences

**PRIORITIZATION EXERCISE**

- Existing & Emerging Health Needs

**RANKED PRIORITIES**

- Priority Needs
- Priority Interventions

**TRANSPARENT AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESS**
Deeper dive: Setting the criteria for the Priority Setting process

Criteria are a set of measures that stakeholders use to weigh and determine which health problems, challenges, and solutions should be made a priority. These criteria should be defined before starting the priority setting process and be the basis for final priority setting decisions. The WHO suggests a non-comprehensive list of five criteria that can be used to set priorities in the health sector. These include:

- **Burden of disease**
- **Effectiveness**
- **Cost**
- **Acceptability**
- **Fairness**
Deeper dive: Stakeholder engagement in Priority Setting

Priority setting is a shared and multisectoral responsibility that relies on participatory and inclusive stakeholder engagement. The World Health Organization identifies three categories of stakeholders that should be involved in priority setting:

**Government**
The role of the government is to plan, initiate, coordinate, and oversee the priority setting process within and across stakeholders and organizations. The way in which government stakeholders coordinate the priority setting process and who specifically will engage depends on the economic and political environment of the health system.

**Providers**
Service delivery providers can offer insights into the feasibility of prioritized service delivery decisions, including balancing patients’ needs and demands with cost-effectiveness.

**Clients/citizens**
To ensure stakeholders are accountable for their decisions, citizens should be involved in determining which priorities are set as a part of a democratic process. Citizens should be well-informed in advance about the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
Priority Setting – 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 Priority Setting 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
- **Understand 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 [Module] 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 the enabling factors for Priority Setting?**
  - Strong governance
  - Political and financial commitment
  - Regulation and implementation capacities

- **What are some key inputs for in Priority Setting?**
  - Diverse sources of data (including health and burden of disease information, service delivery evaluations, and cost-effectiveness assessments)
  - Multi sectoral stakeholder engagement
  - Criteria, or a set of measures that stakeholders use to weigh and determine which health problems, challenges, and solutions
Learn from what others have done

**Sustainable Health System Development | Afghanistan**
Priority setting for universal health coverage in a conflict setting

**National Rural Health Mission | India**
A decentralized approach to improving community-engagement in priority setting
Afghanistan: At-a-glance context

South Asia

Low Income

Conflict-affected and fragile state
### Afghanistan: At-a-glance context

<table>
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<th>GDP per capita ($PPP)</th>
<th>Human Development Index</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth</th>
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<th>Percentage of population living in rural areas</th>
<th>Percentage of population living under $1.90 per day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>35.5M</td>
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Learn from what others have done: Afghanistan

Why reforms were needed

- Afghanistan’s health care system has been impacted by **intense conflict, economic insecurity, and significant resource-constraints**

- 80% of Afghanistan’s health system is funded by donors, making it necessary for the ministry of health to **invest in priority setting mechanisms** that promote sustainable and cost-effective strategies for health services funding.

Approach

The ministry collaborated (2017-2018) with national working groups from **different levels** of the health system to revise both the basic and essential package of health services.

This involved a multicriteria approach based on four principles:

- Translating international evidence to the local context
- Creating consensus among all stakeholders on a well-defined selection criteria
- Conducting a transparent and documented process
- Agreement by all health system actors on priority decisions made during the priority setting exercise
Learn from what others have done: Afghanistan

- **Adapts** international evidence to the local context
- **Utilizes** a clear and transparent multilevel and multisectoral decision-making process.
- **Prioritizes** effectiveness, local feasibility, affordability, and equity
India: At-a-glance context

South Asia

Lower-Middle Income

Multiple languages
## India: At-a-glance context

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<td><strong>66%</strong></td>
<td><strong>21%</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.34B</strong></td>
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Learn from what others have done: India

Background

• The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), now named the National Health Mission was launched in 2005 in India to improve the availability, access, and quality of high-quality health services for all

• The NRHM focuses on 18 states with weak public health infrastructure and outcomes to improve care for poor women and children living in rural areas.

Approach

Using a decentralized approach, India established participatory and accountable processes for decision-making and more efficient opportunities for community involvement.

Community health needs are met through processes like the following:
• Guidelines for the allocation and management of funds
• Elected representative involvement in the institutional structures at all levels of the health system
• Committees in place at the district and village level
Learn from what others have done: India

- **Emphasizes** collaboration among a diverse set of stakeholders
- **Prioritizes** participatory and accountable processes for decision-making
- **Targets** resources to areas most in need of improvement
Learn from what others have done: India

- Despite use of institutional structures for participatory decision-making, **studies have shown mixed-results**. There may be two explanations for this:
  - Poorly-defined planning process
  - Low levels of awareness of the role and functions of the different communities

- These studies underscore **that mandating public participation is not sufficient** and success relies on the presence of support structures such as well-defined policies and guidelines and sustained capacity-building efforts at lower levels of health system.

What elements should be in place to support effective improvements in Priority Settings?

**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

**Inputs**
- Drugs & Supplies
- Facility Infrastructure
- Information Systems
- Workforce
- Funds

**Service Delivery**
- 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
- 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)
What elements should be in place to support effective improvements in Priority Setting?

To ensure priority setting for PHC, the process must incorporate health financing considerations (such as the appropriate allocation of resources), be aligned with primary health care policies, and be guided by the core principles of high-quality PHC.
What elements should be in place to support effective improvements in Priority Setting?

Priority setting exercises should draw upon and strengthen existing community engagement and social accountability mechanisms and to ensure that decision-makers select priorities that align with population health needs and demands and are sensitive to local values and context.
What elements should be in place to support effective improvements in Priority Setting?

Mechanisms for innovation and learning ensure that priorities are set through an inclusive and transparent process and priority recommendations are consistent with the best global evidence and population health needs.
Questions to ask to help you get started

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**

- How reliably and consistently are data used to inform priority setting?
Questions to ask to help you get started

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Sample questions

☐ How reliably and consistently are data used to inform priority setting?

☐ How are stakeholders engaged in the priority setting process?
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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

☐ How reliably and consistently are data used to inform priority setting?

☐ How are stakeholders engaged in the priority setting process?

☐ How often and reliably are the results of the priority setting exercise used to inform resource allocation?
Recap: Priority Setting

System
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Adjustment to Population Health Needs InCludes...

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