

Version: March 2021

GOVERNANCE BASICS - HEALTH WORKERS FOR ALL COALITION

Introduction

The Health Workers for All Coalition (HW4All) is set up as a lively and democratic civil society community of independent, critical-thinking activists and organizations across Southern and Northern boundaries, in order to coordinate actions and advocacy for health workers, based on civil society analysis in the field of global health workforce

In order to launch and grow this civic space, we do not start with creating a new formal institution (e.g. in the form of an association), but go for a more informal setup, following the governance model of the [Kampala Initiative](#). This approach might be reassessed in a later step, depending on the sustainability and progress of the Coalition and the demand by Coalition members.

However, to take up the ambition of this space and community being a *democratic* one, and knowing about the sensitivity of the power issue in convening civil society, some basic governance issues need to be addressed, such as:

- how to access and use this community?
- who manages it?
- to whom are those actively engaged in particular activities accountable?
- who can “represent” the Coalition?
- etc.

This is the purpose of the current document that was drafted and adopted by the transition team of the Health Workers for All Coalition in March 2021.

This document is intended to be a “living” one. Coalition members/partners are welcome to contribute to further shaping and sharpening the instruments of (good) governance of the Health Workers for All Coalition by proposing amendments. The latest, binding version of the “Health Workers for All Coalition Governance Document” is available in the online documentation of the Coalition.

See also, for further guidance:

- HW4All Coalition: Overall work plan 2021 (not yet available)
- HW4All Coalition: Political Declaration

Membership and members

Organizations and individuals are invited to join the Coalition by endorsing its Political Declaration published on World Health Day, 7 April 2021.

By doing so, institutions and individuals will confirm, in an online form, that they endorse the principles that guide the Coalition and share the commitments for engagement and action as framed in the Declaration. At the same time they will be explicitly requested to confirm their intention to join the Coalition. Beyond this, there is no further personal or institutional obligation associated with endorsing the Declaration and joining the Coalition.

Membership

In this sense, and for the purpose of Health Workers for All Coalition governance, we call the organizations and individuals who join the Coalition by endorsing the political Declaration the “members” of the Coalition. The full lists of institutional and individual members are available on the [website](#) of the Coalition.

Regulation of membership is informal: Institutional membership is open to civil society organizations; and individuals can join the Coalition without further ado by endorsing the Political Declaration. The form for endorsements states that “we accept endorsements by civil society institutions (we might get back to you for clarification) and by individuals (independent from your institutional affiliation)”

Members are invited to engage in the steering of the Health Workers for All Coalition. They receive updates from the secretariat and steering group, are invited to review the basic reference documents (work plan, governance, ToR for community tools, annual plans and reports, others) and to join annual review meetings convened by the Steering Group (via online platform).

Members as community members

The “civil society space” provided by the Health Workers for All Coalition is not a fully “protected” one, but can be used by a diverse membership for a variety of purposes and activities. There are no mechanisms for restricting the space e.g. by rejecting endorsements by individuals or by expelling registered participants, except the proper and adequate use of the HW4AC community tools.

Coalition members are active members of the civil society community and can directly contribute to it, in particular via:

- Using the Coalition’s mailing list (to be set up) for informal communications and exchange within the community;
- Proposing and taking the lead in setting up informal or formal thematic task groups (see below).
- Proposing topics and taking the lead in organizing meetings/webinars and other activities for the Coalition members or a broader audience (in coordination with the Steering Group);

Secretariat

A small secretariat cares for the tasks related to the Health Workers for All Coalition that are not explicitly attributed to particular subgroups such as the Steering Group and any formal working groups and task groups. The secretariat is also mandated to represent the Health Workers for All Coalition in formal relations with an external audience and with potential funders.

The secretariat work is initially (tentatively: for the year 2021) shared among two Steering Group members as in-kind contribution to the Health Workers for All Coalition. The final location and composition/staff of the secretariat still needs to be confirmed, depending on the funding available and expressions of interests by members to host (part of) a funded secretariat.

We intend to reach out to potential donors with a concept note and request to fund the ongoing activities of the Health Workers for All Coalition (see work plan 2021), and this funding request and related proposal will include an item on running a minimal secretariat structure.

Main secretariat tasks (administration, accountability, communication, moderation) are still to be specified. If needed/adequate, and in particular if requested by Coalition members, the list of tasks will be made more explicit and related regulations will be added here.

Steering Group (SG)

With the end of initial funding in December 2020, the Coalition's steering committee reaffirmed both the importance of the Coalition and the need and potential impact of its work. Accordingly, a transition team was formed to guide the Coalition until a new Steering Group could be formed. By March 2021, suitable arrangements had been implemented to sustain the Coalition. On 17 March 2021, the transition team was dissolved and replaced by a Steering Group.

As the name states, the Steering Group is responsible for the overall steering, governance and planning of the Health Workers for All Coalition. It integrates the secretariat and oversees the work of any subgroups. It reports back to Coalition members and convenes them for formal processes of reporting, review, and planning, as adequate. If needed, and in particular if requested by Coalition members, the list of tasks will be complemented and related regulations will be added here.

In the initial phase (2021), the Steering Group meets on a monthly basis or even more often, as and when required. Reports of the Steering Group meetings are made available to the members.

With the informal and diverse membership of the Health Workers for All Coalition, the Steering Group is not set up as an "elected" body, but will be composed by representatives of the following key groups and constituencies:

- Secretariat: 2 representatives
- 1-2 representatives of all subgroups (in particular: task groups)
- 1-3 "free" members, co-opted by the SG based on a call to transition team members (March 2021)

The list of Steering Group members will be published and updated on the Coalition website.

As part of their regulations (see below), all subgroups are requested to be represented in the SG and to periodically report back about the state of their work. In the co-option of the "free" steering group members, achieving a good skill mix and geographical and gender balance shall be considered. A quorum will be considered as a simple majority of SG members.

Subgroups (thematic working groups and task groups)

The Health Workers for All Coalition is set up as a civil society space and community that is rooted in the contributions and co-leadership of its members, and with the bulk of work done in thematic work streams and task groups convened and led by dedicated members and reaching out to others interested to engage.

Regulations are mainly required for subgroups that plan to issue or endorse policy-oriented statements or to undertake other public activities under the group's name, also referring to the Health Workers for All Coalition. We call such subgroups "formal" ones.

Formal subgroups

In the thematic field covered by the Health Workers for All Coalition, formal working groups or task groups can be convened and implemented anytime by a group of members to foster and facilitate communication and cooperation related to a particular topic (thematic working groups) or a particular task/process (task groups).

Such formal subgroups need to be approved and mandated by the Health Workers for All Coalition Steering Group based on a proposal received and, if the proposal needs to be amended, resulting from a constructive conversation with the members proposing it.

For this purpose, the initiators and conveners of a formal subgroup are requested to submit to the Steering Group an **initial work plan** as well as **Terms of Reference**, including, at least, the following:

- **Title** (“Health Workers for All Coalition task group on...” or “NN Task Team...”), with or without explicit reference to the Health Workers for All Coalition)
- **Thematic field of work:** A comprehensive statement on the topic or process the group will focus on, with background, key issues to be addressed from a civil society perspective and, preferably, an initial hypothesis, analysis or position to which the group refers.
- **Task:** In addition to “internal” tasks such as providing a protected structure and platform for sharing political analysis, strategizing, planning, etc.), the tasks of a formal subgroup might include the drafting and publication of statements, calls or other publications or the organization of public events under the name of the group, and any other way of representing the Health Workers for All Coalition (as subgroup towards an external audience.
- **Time frame**
- **Expected or indicative outcomes** in relation to the political platform.
- **Partnerships**, if any, with HW4AC members and other, external groups
- **Specific internal regulations.** These regulations include at least:
 - membership criteria and modalities of admitting new members
 - modalities related to internal communication and confidentiality (privacy policy).
- **Representatives and secretariat:** Formal subgroups are requested to set up a task and outcome oriented structure including at least the following positions: (a) one to three coordinators or spokespersons responsible for the overview on the group’s activities, the formal reporting and group’s representation towards the HW4AC steering group and membership and any external actors; and (b) a secretariat or technical contact responsible for facilitating and supporting the group’s internal processes and for keeping up the communication with the HW4AC secretariat related to any technical support requested.

The ToR and related mandate of the sub-group confirmed by the SG are binding. Any substantial changes need to be submitted again. In severe cases of neglecting the ToR, the mandate of a sub-group can be withdrawn.

Formal sub-groups are requested to publish their profile (including name, topic/task, coordinator/spokesperson and secretariat) and updates on their activities and outcomes on a “working groups” website.

Formal sub-groups are requested to report back to the steering group or membership about their activities and outcomes at least twice a year (in a written form for the Annual Report. The groups are requested to provide timely and comprehensive responses to concerns raised by the steering group or by members. They are encouraged to regularly update HW4AC members on their activities via the Coalition’s mailing list.

Informal subgroups

Informal thematic working groups or task teams (referred to in the following as "informal subgroups") can be autonomously set up anytime by a HW4AC member or a group of members to foster and facilitate communication and cooperation within the thematic field of work of the Health Workers for All Coalition.

Informal subgroups do not need a formal mandate by the HW4AC steering group and are neither expected to formally report back to the steering or the membership about their work and its outcomes. They define themselves, their task structure and, if needed, internal regulations, including membership criteria and confidentiality. However, informal subgroups must consult with the steering group to obtain concurrence before publishing any statements, calls or other publications under the name of the Health Workers for All Coalition or representing the HW4AC in any way towards an external audience.

Informal subgroups benefit, upon request, from technical support by the HW4AC secretariat, in particular in publishing a static profile of the group (name, topic/task, coordinator) on a HW4AC "working groups" website, clearly labelled as "Informal HW4AC working group on..." or "Informal HW4AC task team on..." (publication by the secretariat, content provided by the group). To benefit from such support, informal subgroups are requested to nominate a group coordinator or moderator who communicates the launch of the working group and, if the group's task is accomplished, its dissolution to the HW4AC secretariat and is responsible for keeping up the communication with the secretariat related to the technical support requested.

Governance document adopted by the Transition Team of the Health Workers for All Coalition on 17 March 2021. This is a "living document", so Coalition members are welcome to provide feedback and proposals for additions and revisions, to be considered by the Steering Group.