



HEALTH SECTOR POLICY RESPONSES AND HEALTH WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 IN NEPAL: LESSONS FOR RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS

Introduction

- Federalization in Nepal in its early stages, lack of clarity and capacity in delivering functions
- Local governments challenged to deliver routine basic health care services and respond to COVID-19

Methods

- A cross-sectional exploratory study
- A total of 90 COVID-19-related policy documents (published January-December 2020) and 23 KIIs (January-March 2021) analyzed
- Our analysis applied a resilience framework developed by the ReBUILD for Resilience project

Results and discussion

- Policy formulation largely at federal level
- Horizontal multi-sectoral consultations in policy formulation process evident, with minimal engagement of local governments – policies not tailored to local context, thus less feasible
- Multiple channels used for policy communication, all top-down and not focused to specific audiences. Therefore, gaps in information and updates among local stakeholders and health workforce (HW)
- Chronic shortages of HW, ineffective HW mobilization, compromised physical and mental safety, inconsistent motivation and support schemes. Despite these challenges, HW showed dedication and continued engagement



The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect UK government policy

What they said...

"While formulating the policies, local problems need to be addressed. The national level policies are made at federal level that do not match with our local context..."

[Municipality stakeholder]

"There was a communication gap. Federal level formulated the guidelines but never informed us about that. We have to search in Facebook, we knew [about the guidelines] through other media..."

[Provincial stakeholder]

"It was very difficult for us to manage due to lack of health workers. We had to do double, triple duty. Talking about our struggle, we could not even eat properly."

[Female HW]

Conclusion

Local contextualization of policies and use of effective, targeted communications are key strategies for managing pandemics and other emergencies.

Strong leadership and a commitment to ensuring physical and mental protection, training, balanced incentives and support for health workers is vital for staff retention, continued health service delivery and to build resilient health systems.



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Further information on this study and outputs

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