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KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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Context and Background: Knowledge Management (KM) Landscape Analysis

UHC2030 provides a multi-stakeholder platform to strengthen collaboration and contribute to the movement for resilient, sustainable, and equitable health systems in order to achieve universal health coverage and global health security by 2030. A key lever for this collaboration is knowledge management. The Knowledge Management Working Group (KMWG) helps position UHC2030 to broker knowledge across the HSS and UHC agenda and find and build upon synergies with related networks.

A mapping of existing knowledge management initiatives and some understanding of the country demand for knowledge related to UHC were key inputs for the development of a knowledge management strategy for UHC2030. In April 2017, KMWG met for the first time and commissioned a stakeholder mapping exercise to understand how networks, alliances, and other initiatives are engaged in knowledge management related to Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and Health Systems Strengthening (HSS). The exercise was completed in two phases, first to inform preliminary discussions at the UHC2030 Steering Committee Meeting in June 2017, and the second phase informed the development of a strategic framework for knowledge management.

The stakeholder mapping and KM landscape analysis included three main components:

1. **Completion of a literature review** to capture lessons and promising practices from previous landscaping exercises and efforts to develop and implement a KM strategy for a network or multi-stakeholder initiative.
2. **Mapping of KM engagement related to HSS and UHC** to understand better existing activities and resources and potential synergies among partners. Preliminary interviews and an online survey helped to catalog standard information from networks and initiatives related to the scope of their KM work, technical areas in which the organization is engaged to contribute to UHC/HSS, current methods for sharing knowledge, and the desired roles for UHC2030.
3. **Exploration of country demand** to identify knowledge gaps and current resources serving knowledge needs related to UHC. Semi-structured interviews with country representatives were conducted to understand how UHC2030 could potentially serve in a knowledge management role, linking the supply and demand and helping to address need.

Challenges for Knowledge Management in the Sustainable Development Landscape

Partnerships such as UHC2030 are designed to accelerate progress toward a development goal by pooling resources, including name-recognition and legitimacy. A review of multi-stakeholder partnerships in the post-2015 development era found that they serve as “an important aggregator and disseminator of knowledge about the issues on which they are focused” (AtKisson 2015, p.5). However, common challenges can impede effective knowledge management if they are not navigated adequately by a knowledge management strategy:

1. *The lack of common definitions.* “Knowledge management” can encompass a range of functions—including generating, capturing, pooling, updating, sharing, and disseminating knowledge. “Knowledge,” in turn, can be differentiated from other concepts related to information and data. Given the diversity of organizations included in partnerships, AtKisson noted the need for a “common ontology” for knowledge management efforts to make sure all members have a shared understanding (p. 20). This dynamic has also been identified across the United Nations System, first in a system-wide review of knowledge management in 2007 and then in a follow-up review of 28 organizations in 2016. The UN experience over this time period provides a useful example for UHC2030, given the markedly different definitions for knowledge management across organizations and the implications for coordination or creating synergies (Dumitriu 2016).
2. *Inadequate investment in KM infrastructure and practices.* Standards, metrics, systems, and incentives among other support are needed for effective knowledge management. Key challenges identified by UN agencies related to KM included the lack of support and sponsorship at the senior level, insufficient staff awareness and organizational culture, inadequate ICT interoperability, and a lack of financial resources (Dumitriu 2016). These deficits worsen when trying to coordinate KM activities across

Box 1. On Finding the Right Role for UHC2030 as a Knowledge Broker

“UHC2030 needs to work on the demand side. There is a lot of knowledge available, but the problem is that the knowledge is not known or they don’t know how to use it. The channels for communications and incentives are very different in lower-income and middle-income countries and it is a different environment in which knowledge is developed and used.”

Source: Stakeholder interview, UHC2030 KM landscape analysis

organizations. In *Mapping Global Health Architecture to Inform the Future*, Hoffman, Cole, and Pearcey (2015) found that “few global health actors are involved in the sharing of intellectual property and in harmonized norms, standards and guidelines” (p. 22).

3. *The difficulties of being a knowledge broker.* UHC2030 has entered a crowded field of networks and knowledge initiatives focused on technical areas relevant for HSS for UHC. While there is a clear need to reduce fragmentation and find synergies among partners, stakeholders expressed caution in thinking through the best way that UHC2030 can serve this role (see example in box 1). The lack of adequate trust and credibility by practitioners and policymakers can “lead to a situation where the brokered evidence is made available (‘transferred’ or ‘translated’) to knowledge recipients without being taken up (‘mobilized’ or ‘implemented’) in practice” (Kislov et al 2017, p. 110).
4. *Inadequate information available about current knowledge sharing practices and opportunities.* A preliminary search for current knowledge management initiatives relevant for UHC2030 surfaced little systematic information about the sharing and coordination among actors in the current landscape. This finding was reinforced by preliminary stakeholder interviews (example in box 2) and by existing reviews of partnerships. AtKisson asserted that “knowledge sharing within partnerships is under-researched” and that “knowledge sharing *among* them...designing purposeful strategies to promote inter-partnership exchange and knowledge use in order to advance a more integrated approach to sustainable development—has not yet been systematically studied” (p.25). This dynamic signals the value for UHC2030 of not just mapping the current stakeholder KM engagement but also establishing a mechanism in the KM strategy to regularly update the landscape analysis in a rapidly changing field.

Box 2. On the need to understand current KM activities in the UHC2030 landscape

“Every partnership is about coordination and collaboration. The trouble is that we don’t even really know what each other is doing, even if we are doing the same things. [Donor] has an objective, and they might fund five different networks. Someone needs to put the networks together, maybe have ad hoc brainstorming once a year, and find out what it is that we are all doing.”

Source: Stakeholder interview, UHC2030 KM landscape analysis

Lessons and Promising Practices for Effective Knowledge Management

The initial analytical work and landscaping analysis undertaken by the UHC2030 KM working group provide insights into promising practices that help to address the challenges noted above. Most importantly, the foundation for an effective knowledge management strategy should be a clear underlying vision. The review of KM in the United Nations System emphasized “the need for a strategic vision” as “the main common element of a preparedness framework” for planning and implementing effective KM (Dumitriu 2016). This theme also surfaced clearly in the preliminary interviews, with a warning that objectives of partnerships could end up with suboptimal clarity and become overlapping (box 3). Stakeholders reflected that the best KM roles for UHC2030 need to be clarified in terms of the extent to which the partnership should facilitate sharing existing knowledge versus actively identifying and addressing knowledge gaps.

The process of defining clear objectives for KM must also include thinking through the needed investments in systems, processes, and staff incentives within the organization. Kislov et al (2017) emphasized that knowledge brokering, done well, is a “costly and resource-intensive strategy,” that requires “substantial organizational investment and commitment.” The need for adequate financial resources and incentives to shape the right organizational culture for effective KM was identified in the review of the UN system and in guidance from the World Bank on how to become a knowledge-sharing organization (Dumitriu 2016; Janus 2016). A research study exploring the knowledge management practices and challenges in an international NGO network (One World International) underscored the need for adequate support and incentives as part of human resource management. Differences in the KM practices of different One World centers were found to stem from financial constraints and how receptive the local organizational culture was to rewarding knowledge generation and sharing (Smith and Lumba 2008).

Box 3. On the importance of defining a clear mission for KM

“We need to define the purpose clearly. There is this danger of mission bleed, where the same people show up in different partnerships and they try to pursue the same objectives each time. Then everyone is trying to do everything with every partnership when a different configuration of people might be better to do different tasks.”

Source: Stakeholder interview, UHC2030 KM landscape analysis

A critical KM need for achieving UHC is to better inform health policymaking and health system strengthening with robust research evidence. One promising model emerging to address this need is that of “embedded research,” in which policymakers, program managers, and implementers work directly with researchers to produce evidence relevant for key policy priorities (Langlois et al, 2017). This model, developed and piloted by the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, reflects a growing call for demand-driven KM. However, determining what role(s) UHC2030 should serve in addressing this gap must include a careful consideration of the needed resources (box 4).

Box 4. On the need for adequate investment to achieve KM objectives

“They need to do this [KM] right and have the purpose and expectations very carefully considered. If they will be generating policy and planning knowledge, they need to hire lead people who can do this and be very clear for whom they want to generate knowledge...a key issue is that there is a huge trust gap between researchers and policymakers.”

Source: Stakeholder interview, UHC2030 KM landscape analysis

Another important message related to knowledge management is the need to establish a “learning loop” for strengthening organizational performance. KM should not just include a range of functions related to generating or sharing knowledge about EDC, HSS, and UHC, but it should also include appropriate metrics to assess the extent to which the KM objectives are being achieved and where adaptations might be needed. The KM strategy developed for the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) demonstrates one approach for helping to ensure that KM practices and processes are results-oriented. To ensure that KM is integrated into the overall “results architecture,” the LDCF and SCCF have developed a KM framework directly linked to the overall results framework for both funds. This practice is closely aligned with the knowledge management preparedness framework for the UN System,

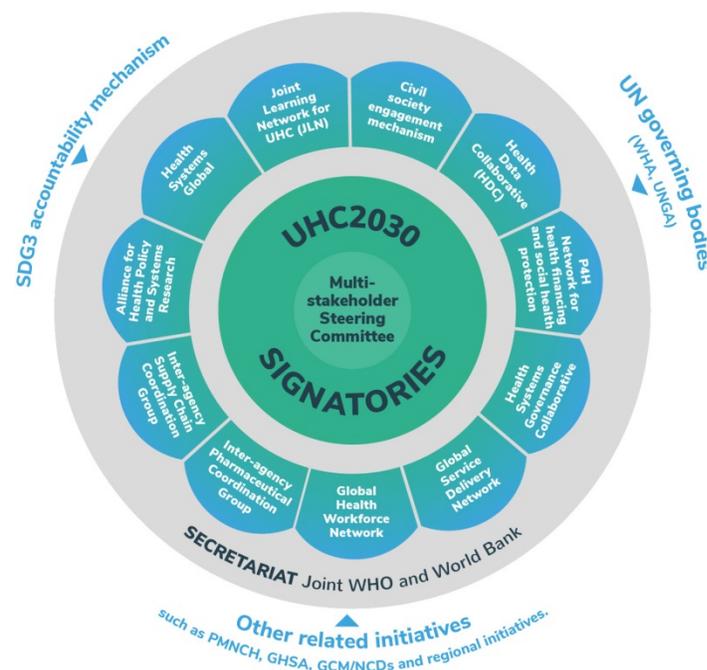
which calls for the alignment and integration of the knowledge management strategy with any other strategies or plans of actions developed by an organization (GEF 2011; Dumitriu 2016).

Finally, UHC2030 can learn from other organizations in setting up the right knowledge sharing processes for achieving KM objectives. In his assessment of current knowledge sharing practices in multi-stakeholder partnerships, AtKisson (2015) observed that “best practice in knowledge sharing is leaving behind the world of static publications and websites...and moving to more differentiated mixes of contemporary tools and approaches” (p. 18). Some more innovative practices surfacing in the field include databases of tools that practitioners can download and use, visualization platforms and knowledge maps, and interactive modeling platforms that provide automated analysis and diagramming to explain cause-and-effect relationships.

Emerging roles for UHC2030

The landscaping analysis, especially the demand-side study with the country representatives interviewed, indicates that UHC2030 could serve valuable roles related to knowledge management. Suggested roles focus on connection and coordination rather than knowledge generation. Three functions surfaced as a starting point:

- To serve as a knowledge hub, providing connections to existing resources and initiatives and becoming recognized as the go-to resource for UHC for both providers and users.
- To provide a “rallying cry” to leverage knowledge for making evidence-based policy decisions. This component would help countries to plan for continuity, develop a more coordinated approach to UHC at the country level, and strengthen the link between technical know-how and political will.
- To create a cycle of learning what works. UHC2030 could not only serve as a central clearinghouse for knowledge but also collect feedback about knowledge use and implementation experiences.



To effectively serve any of these roles, UHC2030 will need to effectively register current demand. Channels for keeping track of country needs could include linking to academia and CSOs for regular communication through CSO Engagement Mechanism (CSEM) for UHC2030, establishing a formal link to policymakers such as through the UHC2030 country members or through an established leadership body of UHC2030 Related Initiative such as the JLN Country Core Group, and periodically surveying users of knowledge products or participants in UHC2030 events. This analysis of the current dynamic landscape for knowledge management related to UHC revealed a rich collection of networks, initiatives, and other knowledge providers that form

partnerships and continually adapt their workplans to respond to funding opportunities and country demands. Some of the UHC2030 Related Initiatives, such as AHPSR or the JLN, have produced dozens of knowledge products across multiple technical areas. The snapshot of knowledge providers developed for this study does not provide an adequate directory of activities for mapping areas of specialization and potential synergies across networks. Instead, the findings provide guidance for establishing a more detailed mechanism within UHC2030, in which partners and affiliated networks could register products and services related to specific technical areas and provide periodic updates.

A comparison of the input from networks and knowledge initiatives with the brief input from country representatives highlights some key potential gaps between the supply of and demand for knowledge related to UHC. More practical how-to guidance, frameworks, and tools are needed for countries to adapt and use to address local challenges. Some of the content areas noted to be in high demand by countries received little to no mention in the survey of networks. For example, relatively few providers mentioned any focus on population coverage, ICT, or data analytics.

Promising practices identified during this review highlight the importance of articulating a clear vision for UHC2030 related to knowledge management and investing adequate resources to support the vision. The formulation of strategic pillars and actions for knowledge management should be coordinated closely with the other UHC2030 workstreams. Together, the workstreams can effectively strengthen multi-stakeholder policy dialogue and advance policy reforms to accelerate progress toward UHC.

Strategic Pillars & Actions for Knowledge Management

The following are the UHC2030’s strategic pillars and actions for knowledge management emerging from the landscaping analysis and KMWG meeting, as well as the Steering Committee’s initial feedback. During the first two years (2018 and 2019), KM actions will focus on supporting connector and coordination roles. Over the longer term, this could evolve to include the more active facilitation of joint knowledge generation to address knowledge gaps related to HSS and UHC.

Strategic Pillars	Actions
<i>PILLAR 1</i>	<i>To serve a connector role as a UHC knowledge hub, providing an interface for navigating existing platforms and portals for knowledge on UHC.</i>
<i>ACTIONS for PILLAR 1</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. To identify synergies among existing platforms and portals - to manage and continuously update a detailed inventory and analysis of UHC2030 members and health system initiatives, and to create partnerships and links to existing resources; 1.2. To create a central health system knowledge hub to facilitate knowledge sharing, including links/interface to existing resources identified above as part of hub; 1.3. To pool and archive knowledge resources produced by partners, especially if not captured in partner digital platform(s);

	<p>1.4. To link policymakers, civil society, academia and other users to digital knowledge through directory guidance, help desk function, including to develop interactive search function or other systems to help users find relevant resources; and</p> <p>1.5. To organize health system knowledge hub marketplace during relevant international conferences such as UHC2030 forum /UN High-level meeting on UHC.</p>
PILLAR 2	<p><i>To align KM engagement more closely with country demand to reduce knowledge gaps related to UHC and refine understanding of gaps, linking knowledge content and services with the countries that need them.</i></p>
ACTIONS for PILLAR 2	<p>2.1. To strengthen UHC2030 processes and infrastructure to be able to respond on country demands for knowledge towards UHC, in close partnership with UHC2030 members and health system initiatives generating this knowledge. A multi-pronged approach to strengthen the processes and infrastructure is recommended, including fostering strong links with UHC2030 members and health system initiatives and extending this to civil society and academia;</p> <p>2.2. To create mechanisms to classify and categorize knowledge in a standardized manner, and ‘indexing’ known sources of such knowledge according to these criteria, to ensure easier search for relevant knowledge based on country demand;</p> <p>2.3. To broaden stakeholder engagement in existing initiatives beyond health system strengthening and disseminate knowledge products more effectively to potential users.</p> <p>2.4. To conduct periodical surveys and other feedback mechanisms to country policy makes, civil society and academia to understand knowledge use and inform a cycle of continual improvement for UHC2030 knowledge management.</p>

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Note: The list below reflects publications cited from the literature review for the landscape analysis.

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