Health Service Planning and Policy-Making
A Toolkit for Nurses and Midwives

Introduction to Toolkit

World Health Organization
Western Pacific Region
In the complex and turbulent world of today’s health care systems the roles nurses and midwives play in those systems are changing rapidly. The contribution of nurses to future health care systems is likely to be even more complicated than it is today. Nurse leaders and managers face the tremendous challenge of shaping the nursing profession to meet the rapidly changing health care needs of the future.

Nurse leaders everywhere need to foresee and respond to changes so that the nursing profession can continue to effectively carry out its key role in providing health care services. Real and lasting progress in nursing will be impossible unless nurses in leadership positions are able to set clear priorities, plan strategically, advocate for and manage change and effectively participate in and influence health care planning and policy-making.

As the largest group of health care personnel, nurses and midwives continue to play a significant part in the delivery of health services, yet their participation in health policy development and strategic planning has been limited. Nurse leaders and managers should be able to fully contribute to policy formulation, health service planning, programme development, resource management, implementation of action plans, and monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

Recognizing the important role that nurses and midwives play in primary health care, in 1989 the World Health Assembly passed a resolution (WHA 42.27) on strengthening nursing and midwifery in support of strategies for health for all. The resolution urged Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO) to encourage and support the appointment of nursing/midwifery personnel in senior leadership and management positions and to facilitate participation in planning and implementing their country’s health service strategies.

The Global Advisory Group on Nursing and Midwifery highlighted the need for nurses and midwives to formulate health care policy at country, district and sub-district levels for improving national health services. It recommended that to ensure the appropriate involvement of these personnel in policy formulation and health service planning, WHO and Member States should prepare nurses and midwives to deal with policy issues through leadership development and participation in policy forums.
At the 54th World Health Assembly, resolution 54.12 was passed, recognizing the significant and cost-effective health system contributions provided by nurses and midwives and urging Member States to take the lead in identifying mechanisms for involving nurses and midwives in the framing, planning and implementation of health policy at all levels. Hence this toolkit on health care planning and policy-making for nurses and midwives was developed.

The toolkit extracts the core strategic planning and advocacy skills essential in addressing nursing, midwifery and health system issues and in implementing policy decision-making processes. It is organized into six modules. Module 1 on Problem Identification provides a conceptual overview of the process of identifying, describing, analysing and prioritizing problems. Module 2 focuses on how to do Stakeholder Analysis. Modules 3, 4 and 5 each focus on particular policy-making and advocacy methods and strategies—Understanding the Contextual Environment, Understanding the Policy, Political and Decision-Making Processes, and Managing Communication and the Change Process, respectively. Module 6 examines how all these methods and strategies are used in Monitoring and Evaluating the Project. Each module in the toolkit has objectives and reference lists and provides definitions, examples, exercises and accompanying guiding exercise sheets. Additional supportive materials are provided in Information and Skills Sheets.

The impetus for this publication was the lack of a practical guide for nurses and midwives to strengthen their skills and knowledge in policy formulation and strategic planning. The publication has been designed for use by nurse and midwifery leaders and managers at all levels who have interests in advocacy, change management and impacting policy decision-making. Toolkit users may find one module that is particularly relevant to their needs and may choose to use that module as a stand-alone guide or to concentrate on only a few sections of greatest relevance. We encourage you to add your own experiences and exercises to the toolkit and welcome feedback from users of the toolkit.

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WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The toolkit, prepared by Professor Carol Gaston, Project Consultant, was made possible through the many thoughtful ideas, contributions, experiences and suggestions of a number of different people who took part in two-years of reviews and pilot experiences. The production process was undertaken in collaboration with Ms. Kathleen Fritsch, Regional Nursing Adviser and Project Coordinator.
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Individual Booklets

Module 1: Identifying the problem and the desired outcome
Module 2: Identifying and analysing the stakeholders and establishing networks
Module 3: Understanding the contextual environment
Module 4: Understanding the policy, political and decision-making processes
Module 5: Managing communication and the change process
Module 6: Monitoring and evaluating the project
Introduction

Background

The need to further strengthen nursing and midwifery services was moved to the forefront by WHO and its Assembly by the passing of Resolution 45.5 in 1992. This resolution recommended that Member States and WHO’s Director General undertake a number of initiatives to strengthen nursing and midwifery services for primary care. In response, a Global Advisory Group was formed by the WHO Director General to look closely at how to best strengthen nursing and midwifery services. The Global Advisory Group, over its four-year term (1992-1996), provided WHO and its Member States with a number of important recommendations in this regard.

At the 49th World Health Assembly, held in 1992, Resolution 49.1 was passed which urged Member States to:

Involve nurses and midwives more closely in health care reform and in the development of national policy.

The 54th World Health Assembly, held in May 2001, reinforced its position by urging Member States to:

Further the development of their health systems to pursue health sector reform by involving nurses and midwives in the framing, planning and implementation of health policy at all levels.

Purpose

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide nurses and midwives with tools to effectively participate in and influence health care planning and policy-making. This is the first of two toolkits, the second being a resource to strengthen nurses and midwives capacity to evaluate nursing’s contribution to health system performance.

These toolkits were developed by the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific to support effective implementation of Resolutions 49.1 and 54.12.
**Audience**

This toolkit has been designed for use by any nurse or midwife who has an interest in advocating for change in their work environment. This includes chief nurses and midwives who are in a position to impact policy decision-making at a country level, as well as clinical nurses and midwives advocating for funds to carry out a community development programme at the clinic level.

**Structure of the toolkit**

This toolkit includes the following:

- Six modules, each with one or more sessions (nine sessions in total)
- Each module has a set of objectives to be achieved and a reference list for further information
- Each session provides definitions, examples and exercises and accompanying exercise sheets
- Additional supporting materials are provided in the information and skills sheets.
Using the toolkit

The toolkit can be used:

- alone or with a colleague or small group
- self-directed
- as a train-the-trainer tool
- with a trainer
- when wanting to advocate or just to develop skills such as ‘change management’ for other purposes.

It is advised that the user reads through each of the modules before beginning any of the exercises.

Assess your own knowledge against each of the module objectives. For example, the objective of Module 1, Session 1, is to ‘carry out a force field and SWOT analysis’. If you are familiar with these skills, then there is no need for you to proceed with this particular session (unless you want to refresh your knowledge and skills).

Following is an outline of the components of the toolkit. The time allocated for each topic is indicated, which is an indication only, however the activity should not take any longer than the time suggested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Information Sheets</th>
<th>Skills Sheets</th>
<th>Exercise Sheets</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining the problem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.1 - 1.5</td>
<td>120 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering the evidence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.6 - 1.11</td>
<td>120 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder analysis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.1 - 2.6</td>
<td>180 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.1 - 2.3</td>
<td>2.7 - 2.9</td>
<td>90 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing contextual issues: values, ethics, traditions, gender, and risks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.2 - 3.5</td>
<td>120 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the policy development processes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.1 - 4.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.1 - 4.6</td>
<td>120 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the decision-making processes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.7 - 4.9</td>
<td>90 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change management</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.1 - 5.4</td>
<td>5.1 - 5.10</td>
<td>5.1 - 5.5</td>
<td>120 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.1 - 6.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.1 - 6.2</td>
<td>120 mins</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>18 hrs</strong></td>
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To complete the full course, three days should be allocated. This will allow adequate time for introductions and explanations, as well as summary sessions and future planning. An example of a programme is provided.

Advocacy

Why advocacy?
The role of nurses and midwives in advocacy is to mobilize all interested parties around an issue which evidence shows will have a positive impact on the performance of the health system. Nurses and midwives need to build relationships in order to gain access to, and to be able to effectively communicate with, decision-makers about the need to take action, what actions are possible, and what benefits can be gained from the actions.

What is advocacy?
Some people see advocacy as organizing marches and demonstrations. Others see advocacy as involvement in political campaigns or lobbying in the corridors of power, while still others see it as an editorial comment in the mass media. Advocacy may require all of these tools.

Advocacy is a combination of individual and social actions designed to gain political and community support for a particular health goal or programme. Action may be taken by, or on behalf of, individuals and groups to create living conditions which promote health and healthy lifestyles.

What is the basis for advocacy?
Advocacy by nurses and midwives should involve securing political action which will improve health outcomes and health system performance. A critical starting point for advocacy is knowledge – that is, having a good understanding of the problem and the appropriate responses. So, advocates for nurses and midwives should understand:

• How the problem or issue is experienced;
• Both common and uncommon experiences;
• The extent to which cultural, social and economic forces have an impact on the problem; and
• Appropriate solutions which are effective given diverse cultural, social and economic conditions.
Who should advocate?
Advocacy is required at all levels of the health system. Whether it be registered nurses or midwives in remote clinics needing to advocate for funding for a particular community development programme; nurses or midwives in hospital settings requiring new technology or a different staff mix; directors of nursing in hospital or community settings requiring additional funding to manage increased demand; or simply advocating for a change of practice among colleagues.

What are the characteristics of a nurse/midwife advocate?
- Personal leadership skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Knowledge about the issue
- Passion
- Energy and commitment

What are the principles of advocacy?
Advocacy requires sustained action with multiple players and needs to be well planned. In fact, there are a number of important facets of advocacy which include:

Be focused and relevant
- Be clear about what you are advocating for
- Establish common themes and messages
- Do not stray from your message
- Make it local and keep it relevant

Work in partnership
- Target individuals and organizations that can get your message across
- Get involved in other peoples forums and use them for your own
- Recruit corporate allies
- Develop media contacts (including those outside medicine)
Be credible and appealing
• Know the facts and the numbers
• Do your homework and document your findings
• Find ‘attractive’ spokes-people
• Use icons who have credibility
• Use interesting stories

Be tactical
• Start by assuming the best of others
• Do not take ‘no’ for an answer
• Be passionate and persistent
• Set realistic goals
• Plan for small wins
• Take principled positions
• Be opportunistic and creative
• Employ multiple strategies
• Be willing to compromise

This toolkit will help you develop the skills required to advocate but also keep in mind the principles of advocacy as outlined above.

Enjoy the experience of using this toolkit!

References


## Example: Advocacy Workshop Programme

### Day 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 08:30</td>
<td><strong>Introductions and explanations</strong></td>
<td>Overheads on advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:30 – 10:30</td>
<td><strong>Defining the problem</strong></td>
<td>Module 1 Session 1 Exercise sheets 1.1 - 1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:30</td>
<td><strong>Tea break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 – 12:30</td>
<td><strong>Gathering the evidence</strong></td>
<td>Module 1 Session 2 Info sheet 1.1 Exercise sheets 1.6 - 1.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 – 13:30</td>
<td><strong>Lunch break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>13:30 – 16:30</td>
<td><strong>Stakeholder analysis</strong></td>
<td>Module 2 Session 3 Exercise sheets 2.1 - 2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:30 – 17:00</td>
<td><strong>Summarize the days activities and outcomes</strong></td>
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### Day 2

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<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 08:30</td>
<td><strong>Summarize the previous days outcomes</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:30 – 10:00</td>
<td><strong>Networking</strong></td>
<td>Module 2 Session 4 Skill sheets 2.1 - 2.3 Exercise sheets 2.7 - 2.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:30</td>
<td><strong>Tea break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 – 12:30</td>
<td><strong>Assessing contextual issues: values, ethics, traditions, gender, and risks</strong></td>
<td>Module 3 Session 5 Info sheet 3.1 Exercise sheets 3.2 - 3.5</td>
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<td>12:30 – 13:30</td>
<td><strong>Lunch break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>13:30 – 15:30</td>
<td><strong>Understanding the policy development process</strong></td>
<td>Module 4 Session 6 Info sheets 4.1 - 4.2 Exercise sheets 4.1 - 4.6</td>
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<td>15:30 – 17:00</td>
<td><strong>Understanding the decision-making process</strong></td>
<td>Module 4 Session 7 Info sheet 4.3 Exercise sheets 4.7 - 4.9</td>
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## Day 3

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<th>Resources</th>
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<tr>
<td>08:00 – 08:30</td>
<td><strong>Summarize the previous days outcomes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>08:30 – 10:30</td>
<td><strong>Change management</strong></td>
<td>Module 5 Session 8</td>
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<td>Info sheets 5.1 - 5.4</td>
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<td>Skill sheets 5.1 - 5.10</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Exercise sheets 5.1 - 5.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:30</td>
<td>Tea break</td>
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<td>10:30 – 12:30</td>
<td><strong>Monitoring and evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Module 6 Session 9</td>
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<td>Info sheets 6.1 - 6.2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Exercise sheets 6.1 - 6.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 – 13:30</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:30 – 15:30</td>
<td><strong>Summarize the outcomes of the workshop and plan next steps</strong></td>
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