4. Communications and social mobilization

Good governance requires participation by informed citizens. Communications and social mobilization are important means to promote understanding and action on UHC.

WHO concentrated communications and advocacy efforts to mobilize governments, partners and other stakeholders behind the theme of UHC for World Health Day 2018 on 7 April. Every WHO representative office led a conversation highlighting “Health for All”. The year-long campaign aims to mobilize policy-makers to make commitments towards UHC, supporting capacity to build cross-constituency partnerships and use media platforms to engage a wider audience on the importance of UHC.

Communications for public health is another tool to support social mobilization. It aims to improve the health literacy and status of individuals and populations by informing, influencing and motivating individuals, institutions and civil society about important health issues and determinants. In November 2017, WHO launched a year-long race to a million pledges – an online campaign inviting people to commit to stopping overuse and misuse of antibiotics. To mark World Antibiotic Awareness Week on 13–19 November 2017, countries across the Region held events involving communities, patients, health providers, veterinarians, farmers, policy-makers and others.

Social mobilization and gender equality go hand in hand. The Technical Working Group on Gender and Social Determinants, which works across WHO technical divisions, launched a report demonstrating the outcomes of a collaborative process in which programmes incorporated gender, equity and human rights into their work at any stage of the programme cycle – from analysis through to monitoring and evaluation. The report scaled up advocacy and community mobilization efforts. Achievements included: improving acceptability, access and targeting of communicable disease programmes; reducing discrimination against people with psychosocial disabilities; improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene; and action on gender-based violence and tobacco control.