

Reflections on examples of social participation in UHC

SUNI SEA Conference: Linking people, communities and primary health care: an essential approach for tackling NCDs and achieving UHC

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Kira Koch

Systems governance and stewardship

Special Programme on Primary Health Care

WHO Headquarters

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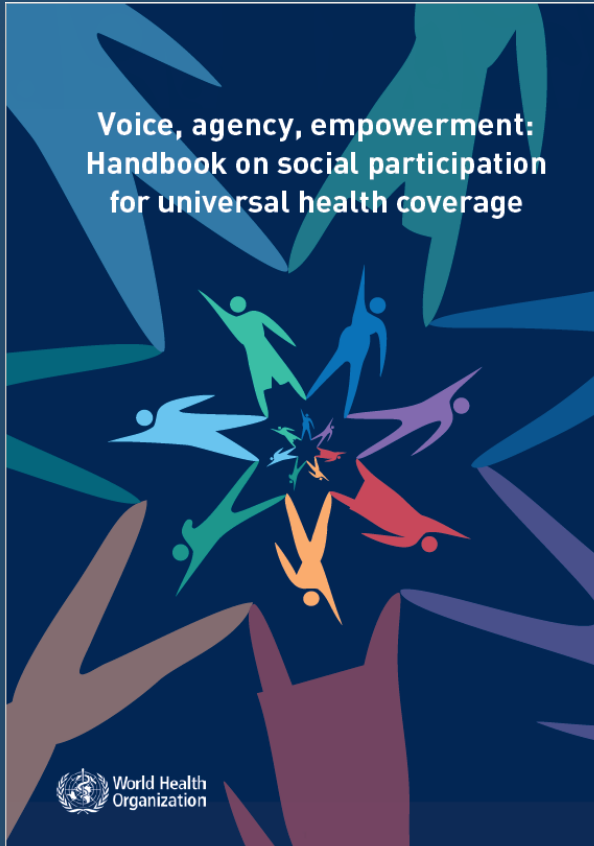


Three components of primary health care



- PHC is a **whole-of-society approach** to health that
- aims equitably to **maximize the level of distribution of health and well-being**
 - by **focusing on people's needs and preferences** (both as individuals, and communities)
 - **as early as possible** along the continuum from health promotion and disease prevention to treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care, and
 - **as close as feasible to people's everyday environment**

Social participation: how to make it work?

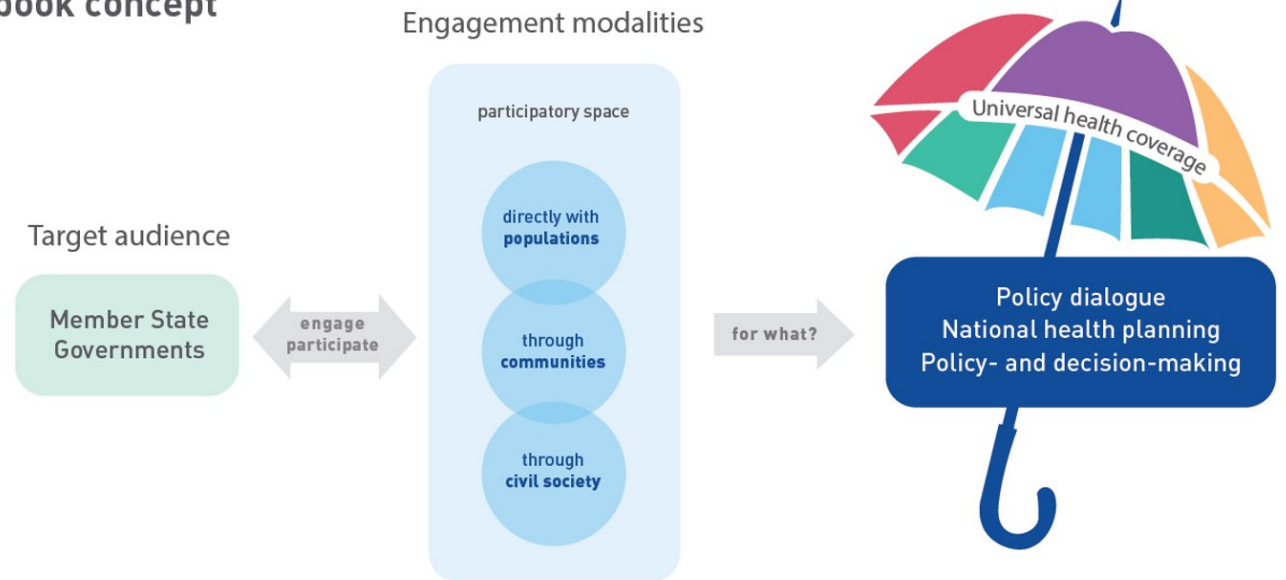


Available at:

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/342704>



Handbook concept



Case study examples include:

- Thailand’s National Health Assembly
- Portugal National Health Council
- Tunisia’s Dialogue Societal
- India’s National Rural Health Mission
- Madagascar’s CSO-led Community Health System Strengthening approach
- ...

Key issues for policy-makers to reflect on when setting up, strengthening and institutionalizing social participation



Chapter 1:

Participation: a core instrument for **voice, agency and empowerment**



Chapter 2:

An **enabling environment** for participation



Chapter 3:

Representation in participation



Chapter 4:

Capacities for meaningful government engagement with the population, communities, and civil society



Chapter 5:

From population engagement to **decision-making**



Chapter 6:

Legal frameworks for participation



Chapter 7:

Sustaining participatory engagement over time

An enabling environment for participation



Chapter 2

An enabling environment for participation

KATJA ROHRER-HEROLD
DHEEPA RAJAN
KIRA KOCH



Handbook on Social Participation
for Universal Health Coverage

Why do you need to consider power dynamics when setting up participatory mechanisms?

Power dynamics create unequal conditions for participation

- Structural barriers to participation for some
- Increasing access to for others

Selected key messages

- Enabling environment for participation → evening out the playing field (empowering those who are weaker and less powerful)
- A participatory space → potent tool to minimize power asymmetries if designed to counter formal and informal barriers
- Social participation → transformative potential
 - challenges societal conventions of whose **voice** should be heard
 - who should have **agency** over their own health
 - who should be **empowered** to meaningfully contribute to policy-making.

Representation for participation



Chapter 3

Representation in participation

KIRA KOCH
DHEEPA RAJAN



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Challenges in finding the ‘right’ representatives:

- Considered legitimate
- Able to represent a constituency, idea, and/or their own individual experience

Selected key messages

- Format & design → ability to take on representative roles
- Balanced and transparent selection strategy
- Format which lends legitimacy to participants
 - Neutral facilitator
 - Homogenous focus groups
 - Meeting location
 - Speaking time
 - Preparatory material
- Quantitative vs qualitative representation

Capacities for meaningful engagement



Chapter 4

Capacities for meaningful government
engagement with the population, communities,
and civil society

KATJA ROHRER-HEROLD
DHEEPA RAJAN



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Recalibrating the balance of power which is rooted in expertise, knowledge, and speaking skills

Selected key messages

- Quality of exchanges → determined by the competency and capacities of the participants
- Level playing field →
 - stakeholders/participants on an equal footing
 - more frank and fruitful discussions
 - policy influence
- **Recognition** is the most fundamental dimension of capacities for equal interaction but is the most difficult to build
- **Communication** depends on **exposure to participatory spaces**
- A lack of technical skills impedes the participation process, but governments can ensure that **technical skills can be compensated for** if lacking

Thank you!

kochk@who.int

