



ROMANIA



NOW

Health professions have a low status; private clinics are expensive

IN THE FUTURE

Equal access to health care for all people

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Main achievements

- A think tank on human resources for health was set up in Romania, with the support of the Romanian country office of the International Organization for Migration. The members of the think tank are representing key organizations that play or could play a role at national level in the field of human resources for health.
- The Romanian President Mr. Klaus Iohannis made a public statement (and a message in support of resolving human resources for health crisis), calling to action at national level. The statement was published on the presidential website and gained wide publicity in the national media.
- The Governing Plan is in force. It addresses the matter of human resources of health in Romania (with direct link to the proposals and debates/agenda of the 5th Oct 2015 national workshop organised by HW4All).

Introduction

Human resources for health are a key component of health systems. Romania faces several challenges in this area, with a very low number of physicians and nurses per capita compared to other EU countries and total health spending levels. Furthermore, the situation may get worse: the numbers of applications to medical schools are down, the number of graduates has fallen and more physicians are leaving the country. The official income for physicians is very low in Romania and average incomes in the health sector have deteriorated compared to other sectors within the past years, due to the economic crisis.⁶

Activities

Throughout the first year in 2013, the actions undertaken in Romania within the Health Workers for All (HW4All) project had to be continuously adjusted to the national context which was marked by various instabilities – volatile at political level, with frequent changes of Government structure and central level authorities' leadership, etc. – culminating in the health workers strike in November 2013.

Regardless of the overall hectic situation, CHPS worked with the main key actors and even extended the initial list of stakeholders in order to conduct an in-depth analysis for up-to-date data gathering by informing the materials to be devised and disseminated within the HW4All project (such as the user kit elements, the stakeholder analysis and power map-prioritising framework, other project 'tools' for an efficient advocacy process, as necessary). As part of the elaboration of the stakeholder analysis, a questionnaire was devised and sent out nationwide. The purpose was (among others) to give stakeholders the opportunity to make proposals and to express their institutional point of view on the human resources for health matter – from the

⁶ Chapter 2: Civil society's contribution and advocacy for implementing the WHO Global Code in the European Region: Six country case studies. Linda Mans, Remco Van de Pas, and Giulia de Ponte. In: Migration of health workers: the WHO code of practice and the global economic crisis. Eds: Amani Siyam, Mario Roberto Dal Poz, 2014.

implementation of the WHO Code to other suitable measures to improve and strengthen the health system.

The project initiatives of 2014 were focused on three types of actions:

- Fine tuning of project's deliverables to become relevant for the national context;
- Strengthening of the collaboration at national level, with a view to obtain support doubled by accountability from the main stakeholders;
- Intensifying the communication and visibility activities within the project for increasing awareness.

Many efforts were put into identifying, acting along and applying the best ways to explain the relevance and the benefits of the implementation of WHO Code within the ongoing challenging context of proven growing emigration of Romanian health workers.

A major event in the second year of the project was the national workshop held in Bucharest on the 27th of November 2014 at the Parliament Palace, organised with the support of the Commissions for Public Health and Economy, Industry and Services of the Romanian Senate and also with the support of the Romanian Country Office of the World Health Organisation. This activity was an important opportunity for bringing together - for the first time in a long time - all major stakeholders and outlining the directions to be followed within the next implementation period of the project. The whole HW4All advocacy process benefited tremendously from the presence of key representatives of national, European and international authorities, public and private organisations and civil society organisations.

The message sent out to all parties was based on the global dimension of the human resources for health and migration, and on the alarming estimate that the health workforce crisis will reach a deficit of 1 million people at European level by 2020 - which will worsen inequities, increase the existing inequalities and interregional disparities with regards to access to health services.

In order to continue to gain support nationwide, CHPS did, together with SANITAS Health Union Federation (a member of EPSU) an analysis of the proposed list of concrete national measures on human resources for health; a questionnaire was developed based on the national position paper and applied during April to June 2015; the results of this piece of research were analysed and informed the project implementation until the end of the year, and was also presented to interested parties on different occasions.

The core activity of the national initiatives undertaken in 2015 was the collaboration of CHPS with the Department of Public Health of the Romanian Presidential Administration. The already identified need of having a Policy Dialogue on human resources of health at national level, followed by an action plan for implementing change, was addressed via a second national

workshop which can be considered a key approach under the HW4All project implementation in Romania, as its effects are a prerequisite for sustainability of all project interventions beyond 2015.

The second workshop, focusing on policy dialogue on human resources for health and viable solutions to be implemented through better national regulations in the field, took place on the 5th of October 2015 at Cotroceni Palace.

Results

As a result of the interest gained in 2014, a think tank on human resources for health was set up in Romania, with the support of the International Organisation for Migration, Romania Country Office. The members of the think tank are representing key organisations that play or could play a role in the field of human resources for health at national level. The group meets on a bi-monthly basis, starting in April 2015, looking at identifying solid measures, which are feasible and can be implemented within the current socio-economic national context.

The new Government of Romania (endorsed by Parliament on 17.11.2015) has taken over the human resources for health and migration of health workers matter and has included it in its Governing Program.

After 3 years of rigorous work, CHPS - together with the main key stakeholders and key actors - managed not only to push the matter of human resources for on the political agenda, but to have it integrated in the Governing Action Plan (as from November 2015). The Government has taken responsibility for 'redefining the socio-professional status of Romanian health workers through adequate salary management, career path, integrity and performance assessment criteria, having as a desired outcome both the improvement of health services quality, but also the reduction of health workers migration abroad and of the personnel shortages in health units, especially in rural areas, through various incentives'. This is a real achievement of the HW4All project endeavours and it shows commitment at national level to take action towards retention of health personnel through implementation of domestic policies - as acknowledged by all involved parties that a package of measures is necessary - and other mechanisms used are cooperation on human resources for health and migration management policies with other EU Member States (for example, cooperation with neighbouring countries such as Republic of Moldova also started during the project implementation as part of the project's activities, in 2015).

In Romania, the think tank supported by the International Organization for Migration will ensure the platform for discussions on human resources for health. The key actors in this field and CHPS will continue to address the matter (exploring funding opportunities in the field is one of its topics). The members of the group already have already offered their expertise for contributing to the work that needs to be undertaken by Ministry of Health, following the inclusion of human resources for health as a priority in the Governing Action Plan.

In addition, it is likely to see the Department of Public Health of the Presidential Administration will house more technical workshops and forge 'compromise'/playing its mediation role so that real measures can be implemented as soon as possible.

At European level, the sustainability is ensured thanks to MMI's commitment to human resources for health and all partners will be involved (either as MMI members or associates).

Lessons learned

Despite the CHPS experience in advocacy and multi-county projects, it was the first time when CHPS participated in an advocacy project of such calibre. Throughout the project partnership the advocacy on human resources for health did not limit itself to a national or European level, but went far beyond, reaching the global aspect of health. The HW4All project meant the start for CHPS of learning more about and using social media for advocacy purposes, and has led to conclude this approach in all CHPS running projects.