

Establishing health system financing research priorities in developing countries

From Mexico to Mali:
Taking Stock of Achievements in Health Policy and
Systems Research

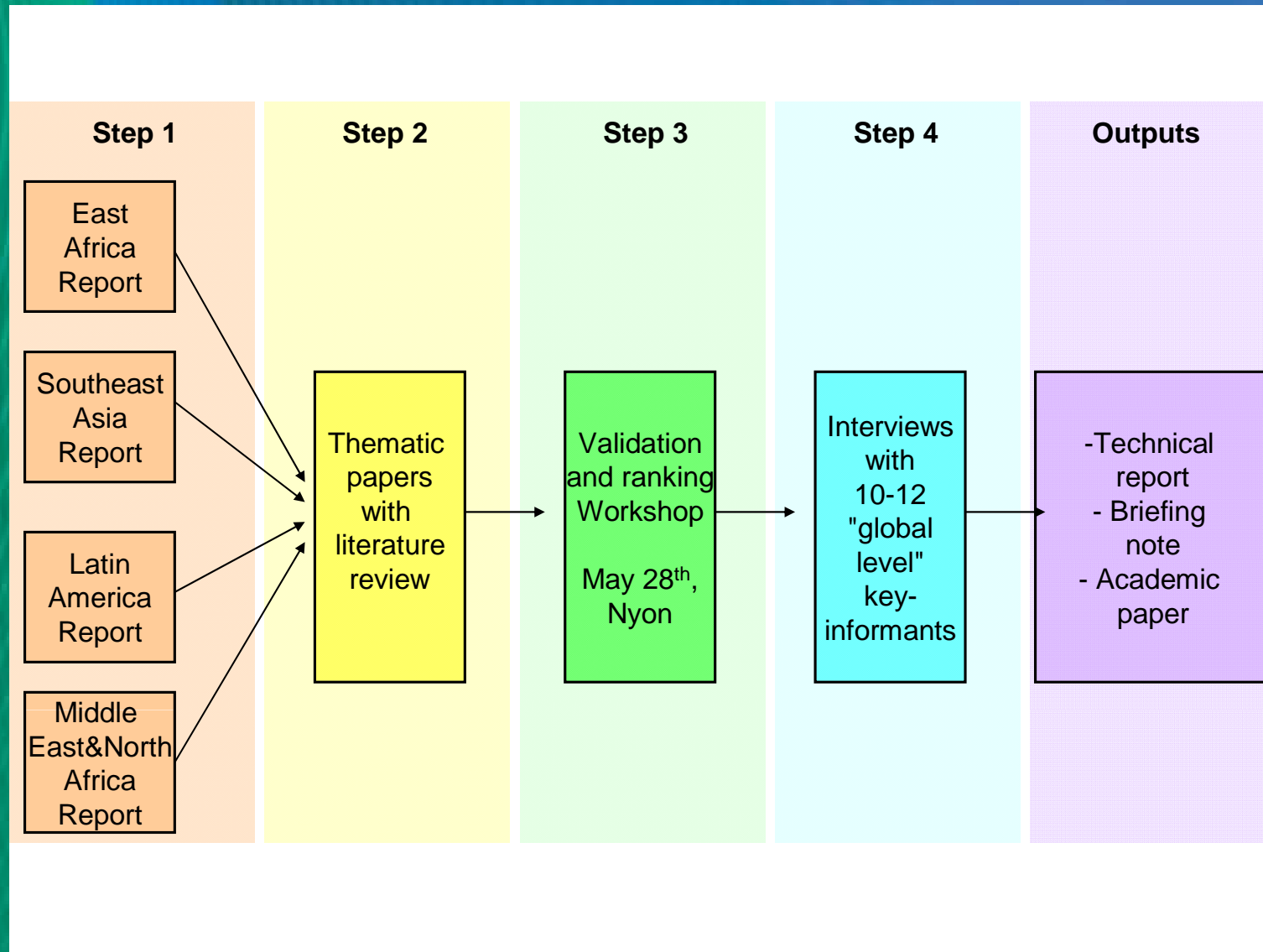
Nyon, May 25th



Objectives

1. To identify the HSF policy concerns and research priorities of key stakeholders in low and middle income countries;
2. To assess the extent to which existing HSF research addresses these policy concerns and research priorities;
3. To develop a preliminary list of core research priorities that require urgent attention to facilitate policy development.

Priority setting process



Five broad policy concerns

Across regions, respondents identified the need to:

- Identify and mobilize additional resources for health care
- Develop, or expand coverage under, social health insurance
- Improve the allocative efficiency of health care spending
- Make health care financing more equitable
- Improve health financing stewardship and management

Research priorities: Collection

1. What method(s) should be used to determine the amount of money to be made available for different programs or projects?
2. How can additional resources for the health sector be mobilized, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of different mechanisms for mobilizing resources?
3. What are optimal levels of external / donor funding? What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that donor funding is driven by national health systems goals?

Research priorities: Pooling

4. How do we develop and implement social health insurance?
5. What is current population coverage under SHI and how can it be increased?
6. What is the equity impact of SHI and how can it be improved?
7. What benefits should be included or excluded from coverage under SHI?
8. How do we ensure that private health insurers contribute towards national health system goals?

Research priorities: Purchasing

9. What are the relative strengths and weaknesses of different purchasing (or provider payment) mechanisms?

Research priorities: Allocation / Provision

10. What is the burden of different diseases (nationally or among certain population sub-groups)?
11. What is the cost-effectiveness of current activities?
12. What is the appropriate allocation of resources towards preventive versus curative care?

Research priorities: Cost sharing / user-fees

13. What is the impact of user fees (equity, catastrophic expenditures, quality, etc.)? What can be done to ensure that user fees do not prevent the poor from accessing health care?

Research priorities: Cross-cutting

14. To what extent do health services currently reach the poorest?
15. What are appropriate criteria for means testing and identifying the poor?
16. How can demand-side incentives be used to improve equity of utilization?
17. How can capacity be built for good financial management at the level of health care facilities?
18. How can capacity be built for good financial management at higher levels (district, provincial, national)?
19. How big is the problem of corruption in health systems financing and how can this problem be addressed?

Methodological weaknesses

- Priorities identified may not be very forward looking
- Over-representation of LICs in the regional key informant work
- Glaring omissions? Insurance mechanisms other than SHI

Challenges

- Prioritizing among priorities: relative urgency, C/E, equity, etc.
- Funding
- Human resources
- Development of better research methods
- Ensuring that research findings are fed back to policy makers / processes