

Consultation on Applying Human Rights to Women's and Children's Health

Oslo, Norway
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Women's and Children's Health: Evidence of Impact of Human Rights

Using human rights to improve women's and
children's health in countries

A Human Rights-based Approach to Health

1 ... is about ...

2 ... achieving equitable health goals and outcomes through a participatory, inclusive, transparent and responsive process ...

3 ... based on legal entitlements (rights holders) and obligations (duty bearers)

Human Rights-based Approach to Health

... means ...

- Using human rights as a framework for health development (equality and non-discrimination, participation, transparency, accountability, AAAQ)
- Assessing and addressing human rights implications of health-related laws, policies , programs and services
- Integrating human rights in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of health-related laws, policies, programs and services

Human Rights-Based Approach: Does it work?

- Conformity of laws, policies, programmes and services with human rights required by binding national and international law
- But does conformity contribute to better health processes and outcomes?
- Increasing – and much needed – interest in demonstrating the practical added value and impact of HRBA
- WHO study on evidence of impact

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Key questions

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World Health
Organization

- What is the evidence that human rights have helped to improve women's health and children's health (WCH)?
- Compelling legal - and other - reasons for adopting a HRBA. Are these reasons supplemented by evidence of beneficial impact on WCH?
- WHO study on evidence of impact

Four country experiences

- Nepal: Maternal and Children's Health
- Brazil: Sexual, Reproductive and Maternal Health
- Malawi: Children's Health
- Italy: Women's and Children's Health

Selected aspects only

There is much to be learnt from these instructive country experiences, but they are not offered as models to be followed: implementation of a HRBA is contextual.

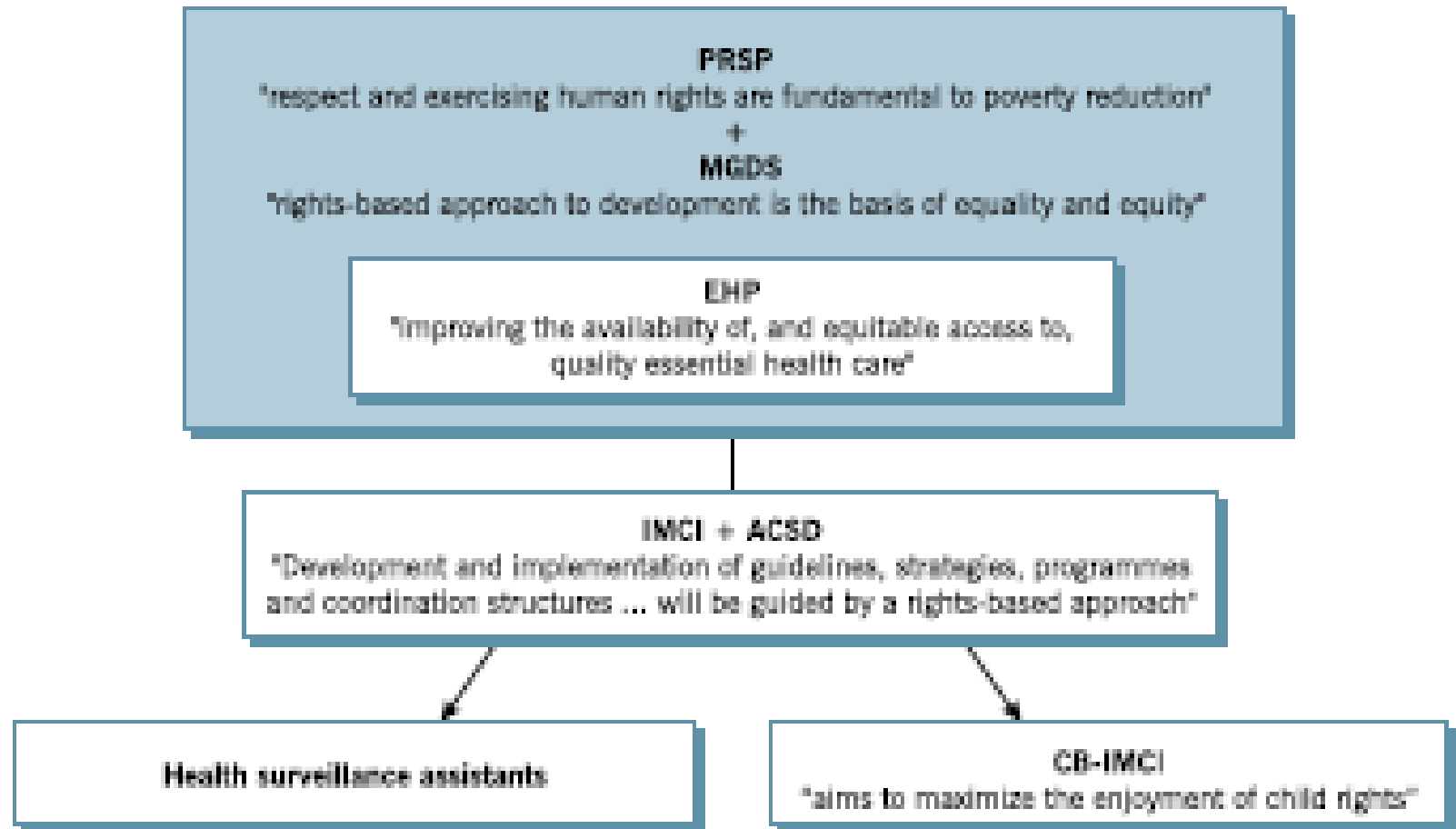
In relation to each country, two key questions



- Has a HRBA explicitly shaped the laws, policies other interventions relating to WCH?
- If so, what is the evidence that these explicitly human rights-shaped interventions have contributed to improvements in WCH?

Malawi

Human rights and development: Malawi's IMCI approach



KEY CONCLUSIONS

HRBA contributes to health gains for women and children:

- HRBA on WCH needs an enabling environment based on:
 - ratification of key treaties
 - right to health in the Constitution
 - high-level political support
 - dynamic civil society
- Requires integration of key human rights standards and principles in national, regional and global efforts, including
 - Meaningful participation of communities and individuals in all decision-making processes which affect their health and well-being

KEY CONCLUSIONS

- Equality and non-discrimination through,
 - inclusive and protective laws and policies,
 - disaggregated good quality data,
 - through services and information which are available, accessible and acceptable for all women and children

- Accountability at all levels,
 - independent monitoring and evaluation, e.g. through national human rights institutions, and redress mechanisms for individuals and communities

KEY CONCLUSIONS

Prospective and retrospective research urgently required:

- Operationalization of HRBA through systematic application of human rights in law/policy/programme development and implementation, and design and provision of services
- Documentation of existing good practices in effective HRBA application and its impact

