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Uniformed Services University

**CGHE**  
Center for Global Health Engagement

**ISSUE 8**  
**MARCH 2024**

# DoD GHE Snapshot

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY IN DOD GLOBAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENTS

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*The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' (USU's) Center for Global Health Engagement (CGHE) is pleased to share the eighth issue of the Department of Defense Global Health Engagement (DoD GHE) Snapshot. The DoD GHE Snapshot is intended to create self-publishing opportunities for GHE professionals to share knowledge and experiences and learn from one another in real time. We hope you enjoy and please refer to our social media and website for real time updates.*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY IN DOD GLOBAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENTS



Enabling, or maybe ensuring, long-term impact and effectiveness of DoD global health engagement (GHE) requires a focus on sustainability. Sustainability, or a variation on the word, is mentioned four times in the DoD Instruction on GHE (DoDI 2000.30):

- 1 ...and *sustainably* improve the operational skills of partner nation (PN) personnel (p.3)
- 2 ...maximize long-term effects and promote *sustainability* of care with the PN health systems (p.13)
- 3 ...avoid initiating treatment that is not sustainable by the PN (p.13)
- 4 Assess, when applicable, the achievement of sustainable health improvements (p.13)

Per the 2019 Global Health Security Strategy document, “the United States (U.S.) will coordinate with partner governments, multilateral organizations, and the nongovernmental sector to promote sustainable donor and domestic financing to build health security capacity beyond the lifespan of U.S. Government’s investments”.

Furthermore, per the 2022 National Biodefense Strategy, “our efforts to protect the U.S. and our partners include direct investment in sustainable, context-appropriate capacity building, and continued performance assessment and improvement, with the goal of achieving effective, country-led, and financed health security systems”.

This principle requires consideration of both the PNs ability to receive, embrace, and incorporate the activity into their own system, and the ability of the U.S. practitioners to sustain the effort over time in order to enable the partner to receive, embrace, and incorporate it into their own system. While this sounds simple, it is less so in practice. How might we set a DoD GHE effort up for success?

What follows is a number of tools and recommendations to apply throughout the engagement process to enable sustained, long-term impact. There is significant overlap and possible reinforcement between and among the tools and recommendations, so maybe this is not as hard as it seems.

## PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

- Consider your partner to truly be a partner. Allow and encourage your partner to lead the effort; to actively participate in the design of the activity, project, or program. Encourage your partner to articulate their desired end-state.
- Foster communication and transparency. Conduct workshops to work together on a task. If an assessment is warranted, assess as a team. Act as an advisor or consultant and defer to your partner, thereby allowing them to own the effort.
- Consider formal agreements and memoranda of understanding to establish clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

# 01



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## COMMUNITY (PARTNER) EMPOWERMENT

- Use participatory approaches to engage both leaders and decision-makers and those who do the work.
- Promote awareness and understanding at all levels and sides of the effort, both PN and U.S.

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## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Adhere to ethical guidelines and principles, such as those outlined by the World Health Organization (WHO), medical professional organizations, and other relevant organizations. Always do the right thing and, when in doubt, ask.
- Ensure informed consent and respect for cultural norms and values in all aspects of your engagement.
- Conduct regular reviews of methods, practices, and progress; engage your partners in this process.

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## CAPACITY BUILDING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

# 04

- Develop training programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of PN military healthcare professionals and local stakeholders.
  - Utilize online platforms and e-learning resources to facilitate knowledge sharing, learning, and communication.
  - Foster teamwork and collaboration through a variety of exchanges in different settings; all does not have to be business only.
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## STRENGTHEN THE SYSTEM

# 05

- Consider the Doctrine, Organization, Training, materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities and Policy (DOTMLPF) structure. It is designed to prompt consideration of all that is needed for a capability or capacity to exist.
  - Consider the WHO's Health Systems Strengthening Framework to set standards and guide action.
  - Adopt a comprehensive systems approach that focuses on the infrastructure needed to sustain a capability.
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## LONG-TERM IMPACT

# 06

- Utilize existing and acknowledged standards to inform and guide efforts; consider the United Nations (UN), WHO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and those of the U.S. Ask your partner if there is a standard or reference point commonly used within the country or military.
  - Stay informed by and leverage international frameworks such as IHR(2005), Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention, and the WHO National Collaboration Framework
  - Collaboratively develop and implement monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress, inform decisions, and assess long-term impact. Report these findings to leadership throughout the process.
  - Consider a Theory of Change or Logic Framework to inform design and set expectations. Acknowledge that one engagement activity does not constitute capacity building; rather sustained engagement over time across a range of topics might produce a new or improved capability or capacity.
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## CONCLUSION

Sustainability is a vital aspect of DoD GHE. For GHE activities to be effective and enduring, careful consideration and proactive addressing of sustainability enablers are crucial at every stage of the planning and implementation process. By focusing on long-term impact, early consideration of strategic enablers, health systems strengthening, community empowerment, and collaborative partnerships, the DoD GHE enterprise can strive to contribute to lasting and positive changes in global health.

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## REFERENCES

DoD Instruction 2000.30:

- Page 3:
  - 1.2. POLICY. It is DoD policy to:
    - Seek to develop and improve the human and animal health capabilities and capacities of DoD and PN personnel to:
      - Enhance the readiness of DoD medical forces and sustainably improve the operational skills of PN personnel.
- Page 13:
  - SECTION 3: DOD GHE ACTIVITIES
    - In addition to the responsibilities in Section 2, OSD, the Military Departments, the Joint Staff, the National Guard Bureau, and Combatant Commands will, in the conduct of GHE activities with PN entities:
    - Limit direct health care to PN populations, except when required or requested by the PN and during humanitarian civic assistance activities designed for the purposes of individual and unit-level training of DoD personnel.
    - Direct health care planning will emphasize PN autonomy and include:
      - Measures to maximize long-term effects and promote sustainability of care with the PN health systems.
    - These activities should augment, not replace, the PN health systems:
      - When possible, avoid initiating treatment that is not sustainable by the PN.
    - Assess, when applicable, the achievement of sustainable health improvements, as well as effectiveness in achieving security strategy objectives and military end-states in accordance with Section 715 of Public Law 112-239.