HEALTH POLICY AND HEALTH FINANCE KNOWLEDGE HUB

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From Research to Policy influence: a Case Study from the Pacific

As part of the Health Policy and Health Finance (HPHF) Knowledge Hub work program for 2009 the Nossal Institute for Global Health partnered with the Sydney School of Public Health and Menzies Centre for Health Policy at the University of Sydney.

Through this partnership Joel Negin undertook a preliminary assessment of the Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs) for health in the Pacific region. The study was undertaken through a document review of the academic and grey literature and key informant interviews with representatives of government agencies, multilateral organizations, donor agencies, academic institutions and other experts. As a result of this research three Working Papers, which form part of the HPHF Knowledge Hub Working Paper Series, have been developed to help inform debates about aid effectiveness and health policy development.

The first of the Working Papers provides a historical overview of the emergence of SWAs globally and in the Pacific, and examines how Pacific Island countries and donors have begun to endorse SWAs as a way of working in the health sector. The second explores the health policy making process in the Pacific region, where the dispersed and small populations of its 22 countries and territories, its strong regional actors and mechanisms, and the presence of influential donors and international partners constitute a unique forum for policy making. The final Working Paper in the SWA series provides a comparative case study of health policy development in Samoa and the Solomon Islands, assessing them against key elements of global experience.

As part of the peer review and quality control process for all Hub Working Papers the drafts were shared with the World Bank and other donor and Pacific Island stakeholders. Subsequently the World Bank provided feedback on the drafts and in collaboration with other development partners requested that further work be done to identify examples of governance and management arrangements from other global health SWAs to help inform a model in development in the Solomon Islands. This subsequent analysis (principally through a search of the academic and grey literature) has been documented in a HPHF Knowledge Hub Background Briefing Paper.

Further work through ongoing support to stakeholders involved in SWAs in the region is planned during 2010. One element of work related to funding flows in the Pacific will compare the experience in countries with SWAs with those that do not have SWAs, to determine if SWA mechanisms have an impact on funding allocations, funding amounts and the prioritisation process. An additional study will also examine the role of a number of Pacific regional cross-country governance mechanisms.

This initial work however, has already proved to be useful and has been utilised in a number of ways. The World Bank has reported for example, that the SWA research has been shared with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and other key development partners to help inform discussions on what arrangements might be most appropriate for the Solomon Islands. In addition, the findings have been shared with Katja Janovsky to support joint work with the PNG National Department of Health, AusAID and others on the health SWA in PNG. The research is also informing work by the WB on other SWAs in the region.
To provide comment or get further information please contact: www.ni.unimelb.edu.au with "Case Study" as the subject.