R4HSSS 3rd Year Research Plan
October 2022

Background

As per R4HSSS research management policy, the project develops annual research plans that identifies key research priorities for the health system(s) in northern Syria. For the third year of the project (October 2022 to October 2023), the process of developing this plan involved the following steps:

- An online survey that was shared among R4HSSS team as well as R4HSSS partners and networks to propose new research ideas under each workstream.
- The findings of the research were discussed in R4HSSS Executive Board meeting in Gaziantep in September 2022.
- Further one to one consultation to collect more research ideas was conducted between August and October 2022.
- A research planning session was conducted during R4HSSS dissemination conference in Gaziantep in September 2022. During this conference, we collected feedback and research ideas from a wide range of partners.

Current research projects

The following table includes all research projects that have already started under R4HSSS in the last two years. The priority of this year is to continue the implementation of some of these research that have not been concluded in the last year. This list includes only original research that involves primary data collection; it does not include opinion pieces that can be found on R4HSSS website.

Paper/Topic	Details	Lead	Contributors	Start - submission
Aid effectiveness - Harmonisation	Assessing two elements of aid effectiveness as per the Paris Declaration (Alignment and harmonisation). The project used (1) quantitative analysis of publicly accessible financial datasets on the humanitarian response in Syria, (2) KIIs and FGDs.	Munzer Khalil	Maher, Hala Reviewers: Karim and Zedoun	Nov 2021 - Sep 2022
Health aid displacement	Another paper derived from the aid effectiveness paper	Munzer Khalil	Maher, Zedoun, Karim Reviewers: Fouad & Summit	Nov21 - Oct 2022
Surgical capacity in NW Syria	A detailed assessment of the surgical capacity in NW Syria. The paper uses a similar approach of the Lancet commission on global surgery. The methods are (1)	Soren Kudsk-iversen	Shoaib Hussain, Houssam Alnahhas	Jun21 - Nov 2022

	detailed surveys in most hospitals in NW Syria with advanced statistical analysis, (2) KIIs.			
Cross border health interventions in conflict settings	A scoping review on cross border health interventions in conflict settings. The paper concludes a research agenda for this topic	Ronja Baatz	Karim, Kristen, and Preeti	Published Mar 2022
CHWs optimisation	How to better optimise the work of CHWs in NW Syria?	Ahmad Habboush	Brynne, Karim	Mar22 – ongoing
Medical education in Syria	A systematic review on all published literature on medical education in Syria between 2011 and 2021.	Yamama Bdaiwi	Ammar Sabouni, Karim, Safwan Chalati, Preeti	Jun21 - July 22
Medical education in nw Syria	A situational analysis of the medical education status in NW Syria. The paper used (1) document analysis, (2) field surveys, (3) KIIs and FGDs to screen all current initiatives of medical education in NW Syria	Yamam Bdaiwi	Safwan Chalati, Karim, Munzer, Preeti	Jun21 - Aug 22
health research capacity strengthening programmes	A comparative analysis of health research capacity strengthening programmes in an ongoing conflict setting, Northwest Syria as a case study.	Yamama Bdaiwi	Ammar, Omer, Safwan. Reviewer: Nassim	Oct22 – ongoing
Central desks as a tool for health governance in NW Syria	The paper assesses the role of central desks (such as HIS unit, SBOMS, referral desk, SIG) in the health governance in NW Syria. The paper uses: lit review, document analysis, KIIs, and 8 FGDs.	Maher	Zedoun, Orwa, Munzer, Review: Karim	Aug21 - Sep 2022
HIS situational analysis	How health information is collected, managed, stored, analysed and stored in the health sector in NW Syria. The paper uses more than 100 surveys in health facilities + KIIs. Data collection started in March.	Mahmoud Hariri	The HIS unit team, Reviewer: Karim	Feb22 – ongoing
Public health information in nw Syria	Assess the availability of all domains of public health information in NWS	Mahmoud Hariri	The HIS unit team, Reviewer: Karim	July22 – ongoing
Women's leadership in health in conflict and peacebuilding	Exploring the interferences between health and peacebuilding initiatives, and how health can be a bridge for peace. The paper relies on lit review, KIIs, FGDs	Kristen	Mariana, Mouna, Sali	Feb22 – Oct 22

Women's leadership in health in NWS	Kristen PhD	Kristen			Sep20 – ongoing
Legal frameworks for the health sector in NW Syria	How the medical work is regulated in NW Syria? How medical mistakes are dealt with legally in relation to accountability and criminality? The research will use document analysis, lit review, KIIs and FGDs	Sakhr Sawan	Munzer		Mar22 – ongoing
Medical malpractice and errors in NWS	How to deal with medical malpractice and errors in conflict settings – the case of NWS	Hala	Fouad		Mar22 – ongoing
Aid effectiveness - ownership and other elements	To assess the other three elements of aid effectiveness as per the Paris Declaration (ownership, Managing for Results and Mutual Accountability).	Munzer Khalil	Zedoun, Karim Reviewer: Preeti		Oct22 – ongoing

Priority research ideas for R4HSSS 3rd Year

Based on the findings of the research planning process between June and October 2022, we concluded the following research ideas under each workstream. The order in the table follows the voting of 46 participants during R4HSSS conference in Sep 2022.

Research Topic	%	Comments
Provision of health services		
Health of people with disabilities: prevalence, access to health, quality of services.	52%	
Mental health: self-harm	43%	
IPC services in conflict settings: best practices, availability, quality, and capacity	40%	
Mental health: substance abuse	28%	Drug abuse among health service providers – children.
Non-Communicable diseases: prevalence, risk factors, and health system response	28%	Cardiac and respiratory chronic diseases.
Health of IDPs	28%	
Anti Microbial Resistance (AMR)	22%	
Non-Communicable diseases: interruption of treatment and patients tracking	17%	
Communicable diseases: prevalence, risk factors, and health system response	13%	Neglected tropical disease

		(Leishmaniasis) - Hepatitis

Other research questions/ideas:

- What is the lived experience of patients with conflict associated injuries whose wounds are affected by AMR in northwest Syria?
- Geriatric health: availability and quality of services.
- Traditional medicine and practice.
- Spinal cord injuries rehabilitation: prevalence, availability of services.
- Occupational and environmental health

Medical Education and professional training

Accreditation of medical education initiatives in conflict and fragile settings: Lit and scoping review	46%	
Medical practices: local practices, alignment with international standards, and adherence to protocols.	44%	
Health workforce: availability, qualification, and organisation.	38%	WHO started similar research Aug22 (EU)
Distance and remote clinical training programs: telemedicine and VR	35%	
The role of the Syrian medical diaspora in medical education in Syria.	31%	
Evaluate the current professional training provided by various actors in NWS	31%	Evaluate the suitability to meet the actual needs
Postgraduate medical education in nw Syria: perception of the resident doctors	23%	

Other research questions/ideas:

- Challenges of Practicing Evidence Based Medicine by clinicians in NW Syria under the impact of conflict.
- Attrition rates and strategies supporting retention
- Career pathways of medical workforce: a mapping exercise
- Evaluate available curriculums in the medical teaching institutes
- Health workforce planning: population needs, health labour market needs, medical education uptake.

Health Information

DHIS2: efficiency, appropriateness to the context, alternatives	60%	
The integration between community based data systems and facility based HIS systems	51%	
Locally developed mechanisms for HIS in fragile settings: lit review	33%	
E- health and m-health: applications in health systems in conflict settings	31%	
Block chain as a mechanism for health information in conflict settings	9%	

Other research questions/ideas:

- Assessing the feasibility of having one unified HIS for northwest Syria.		
Health Governance and Financing		
Health financing in northern Syria: how to move from humanitarian to early recovery.	70%	
The role of private sector in the health system in northern Syria	50%	
Health financing: from humanitarian to early recovery- lit and scoping review to learn from other contexts.	36%	
Local health governance in northwest Syria: the role of the health directorates	34%	
The role of bottom up locally led health bodies in preserving civil leadership (and de-radicalisation)	30%	
National Health Accounts in northern Syria: Healthcare expenditure and gaps	30%	
Other research questions/ideas: - What is the role of Syrian NGOs in rebuilding the health system in Syrian opposition-held areas during the early recovery phase? - Mental health governance in northern Syria: current structures and ways for development. - Assessing out of pocket expenditures: Willingness to pay for medical care and education. - Assessing the disrupting role of NGOs in weakening the national health bodies. - The impact of humanitarian aid on financial toxicity		