How to Plan and Submit an Organized Session at the Global Symposium on Health Systems Research?

While planning for the previous Health Systems Research Symposiums, organizers have noticed the low number of proposals for organized sessions originating from Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC). We are determined to grow LMIC submissions for organized sessions as we prepare for future Symposiums.

Therefore, in preparation for HSR2022, HSG is strongly encouraging those in LMIC settings to submit abstract for an organized session.

We have pulled together past experiences and hope it will help guide our members as they prepare their submissions. The theme for the Bogotá symposium is "Health Systems Performance in the Political Agenda: Sharing lessons for current and future global challenges" which aims to further explore how to deal with the structural issues that all health systems face. We look forward to learning about how different contexts tackled challenges related to how the larger social, political, and economic determinants of health shape service provision; the training and deployment of human resources for health, and how valuable they are in light of their role during the pandemic; but most importantly, for how the intersection of politics and health policy influence the quality of care.

What should you know as you prepare an abstract for an organized session?

Please note following:

- Organized sessions are 90-minute-long events where organizers decide the topic/title, the speakers and moderators, and the format of the session (participatory – round table discussions, debates, fishbowls, games, etc.; or traditional presentations by panel members). Organizers of these sessions are responsible for coordinating and communicating with their speakers.
- The issues discussed are expected to be relevant to the symposium theme/sub- theme, and this relevance has to be well reflected in the abstract itself;
- There will be a total of 120 parallel sessions (organized, abstract-driven, Thematic Working Group, etc.) in the symposium program and only up to 50% of these sessions are allocated to organized sessions. Thus, submissions for the organized sessions are highly competitive. Based on experience from previous symposia only about 20-25% of submissions are accepted;
- If your session proposal is not selected there are more further options to have your ideas feature in the symposium program:

- First, you may be able to organize a **satellite session** on the Monday or Tuesday before the main conference starts. These range in length from 2 hours to a full day. However, you will be expected to apply specifically for the Satellite Session. If the topic of the session is relevant to the symposium theme (or sub-theme), your submission will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis. The difference between organized and satellite sessions are following:
    - Organized sessions are selected competitively by a scientific committee for the main program, and if chosen, there is no charge to organizers for room-rental and audio-visual equipment, beyond the conference fee itself.
    - Satellite Sessions, when aligned with the symposium theme/sub-theme, are selected on a first come first serve basis and organizers will be expected to pay for the room and basic equipment rental. The price depends on the length of the session and they will take place before the main program begins.
    - Both sessions (organized and satellite) are listed and reflected in the symposium program and are open to all delegates to attend.
- There are also **capacity- strengthening** sessions occurring in parallel to satellite sessions on Monday and Tuesday. These workshops are for educating participants and developing their capacity. The Scientific Committee reviews these submissions, and when selected, the costs are fully subsidized by HSG.
- Finally, if the organized session is not accepted, it is possible for the individual presentations to go forward into the **individual**, abstract-driven competition for papers and posters; the deadline for this is April 15, 2022.

How to plan and deliver a session?

- Please be aware we are prepared to accept submissions in English, French and Spanish languages.
- We strongly recommend considering participation of panelists from different regions and language backgrounds to support cross-regional learning and engagement. Such diverse contributions will give your submission a competitive edge.
- Please start planning early: don't wait until just before the deadline to contact potential contributors to your session! Speakers may only participate in one organized session – so you may include a speaker who is listed in several abstracts, however they will be asked to choose only one to participate in if multiple sessions are accepted.
- Select the title/topic for the session, preferably focusing on your country's/region 's health policy and system priorities (or on cross-regional priorities if you consider going beyond your immediate region); in your abstract, be clear on how it fits with the symposium theme/sub-theme;
- Identify and reach out to potential session speakers-presenters and moderators.   Diversity is valued in the symposium: try to mix speakers from different countries/regions, consider gender balance and where possible, engage young researchers. You might want to include health system managers or policymakers as well. A good organized session is usually one that is planned jointly by some form of existing team that spans across countries but had

worked on similar issues either jointly or separately under the same initiative so there is a common and established link.

- Plan your session in a way to allow sufficient time for Q&A and discussion. Do not overload the session with presentations and leave at least 20 minutes for Q&A and discussions. Think about how to make the session format engaging and vibrant. Be aware that session attendees are there not only to listen but also to engage and ask questions;

- When conceptualizing and designing your session, be aware that attention is paid to the session details, which provides the detail helps the scientific committee who will review your session to understand what each speaker in your session has to offer and why the session will stand out from other similar submissions. Focus especially on:
  - Session details—questions people should ask and the lessons they will learn. Specifics of what would be covered in the session—not just generalizations, but bullets that help the assessors understand flow, prioritization, and detail and how what will be presented can be applied
  - Technical expertise of each presenter - each of the speakers is expected to have strong domain expertise to support their case to present on the topic

- Coordinate abstract preparation (drafting and finalization) among session speakers/moderator(s) and after completion submit necessary information through abstract submission system available from the symposium website. Coordination requires time so you need to plan for it in advance.