

# QUALITY OF CARE IN FRAGILE, CONFLICT-AFFECTED AND VULNERABLE SETTINGS

**TAKING ACTION**





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Quality of care in fragile, conflict-affected and vulnerable settings: taking action

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# Preface

This document outlines a practical approach to taking action for quality of care in settings of fragility, conflict and vulnerability. It provides a starting point for planning and implementing action for quality health services that are effective, safe, people-centred, timely, efficient, equitable and integrated.

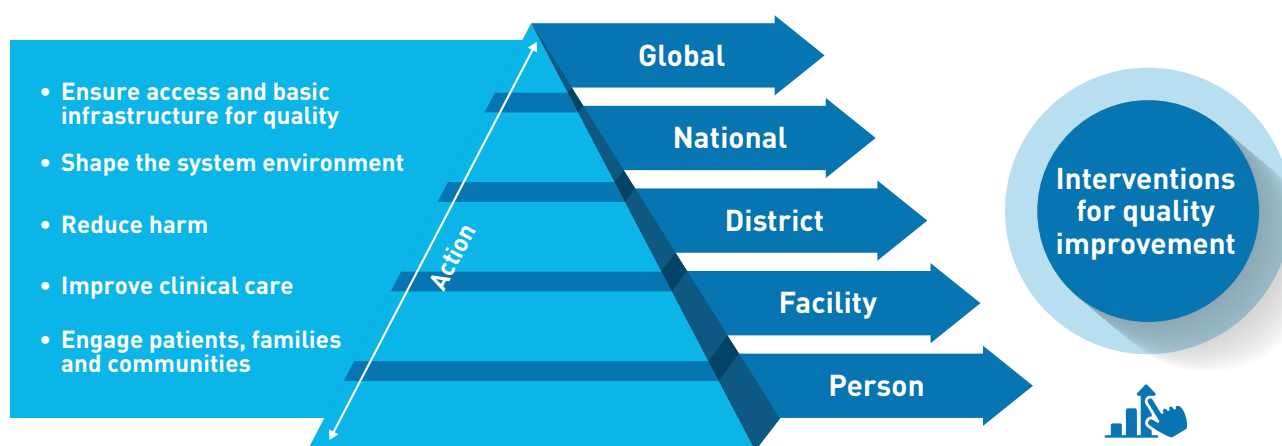
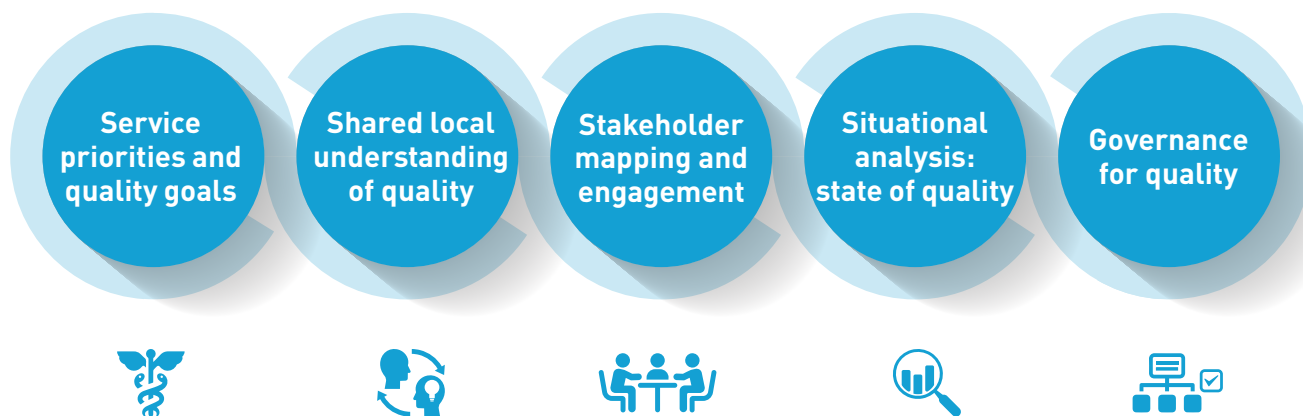
The target audience is organizations involved in planning and delivering health services in fragile, conflict-affected and vulnerable settings, including state and non-state health authorities at the national and subnational levels, humanitarian actors, health cluster coordinators and health-care providers.

The document is a nonprescriptive process guide to support action planning, including assessment of needs, challenges and assets; establishment of structures for quality; and agreement, implementation and monitoring of a set of interventions for quality improvement.

The challenge of addressing quality is compounded because fragile, conflict-affected and vulnerable settings do not represent a homogenous set of circumstances, but rather a series of unique settings. Key to success will be adaptation of the approach to each particular context, recognising the value of local ownership and wisdom. Indeed, there is much still to learn about what works and in which contexts and how to develop and sustain a culture of quality. A focus on continued learning will be critical.

However, enough is known to make an important start on efforts to improve quality of care in fragile, conflict-affected and vulnerable settings, and that is what this document is intended to support. Lives depend on it.

## Eight essential elements of strategic action planning for quality in fragile, conflict-affected and vulnerable settings



# Acknowledgements

This document was produced under the overall direction of Edward Kelley and Shams Syed from the Integrated Health Services Department, World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland. It is the product of foundational technical collaboration between WHO headquarters, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and the University of North Carolina, United States of America, aimed at addressing quality in fragile, conflict-affected and vulnerable settings.

The principal writing team consisted of Sheila Leatherman, Matthew Neilson and Shams Syed. The content draws heavily on the WHO *Handbook for national quality policy and strategy* and other relevant WHO technical content related to the emerging work on quality health services.

Substantial content for this document has been adapted, with permission, from a number of published and unpublished papers authored by Sheila Leatherman and a team including Maggie Holly, Dilshad Jaff, Grace Jaworski, Charlotte Lane, Sheila Patel, Jen Stutsman, and Linda Tawfik, and assisted by colleagues at the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina. The work of the University of North Carolina on quality in extreme adversity has provided the academic foundation for this document.

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