

Webinar Series on Clarifying, Applying and Supporting Implementation of Whole of Government (WoG) Approaches and Strategies

This series of webinars will develop and share knowledge about whole of government approaches and strategies. The goal is to influence and support country-led applications and capacity building that are currently being used to follow up on the UN Summit of the Future, the achievement of the SDGs and actions identified in the UN Transforming Education Summit and similar global calls to action.

Several UN and global organizations have declared their support for intersectoral cooperation and whole of government approaches. The 2022 statement from the Education Commission/Dubai Cares Foundation on [Rewiring Education](#) began that discussion as it called for the examination of system incentives and re-alignments. Other agencies and meetings such [UNESCO](#), [WHO](#), [OECD](#), [World Bank](#) and [global educator organizations](#) have all published similar statements. They are also being invited to this initial meeting to exchange information on the state of knowledge about WoG approaches.

However, countries struggle to implement WoG approaches. An [analysis](#) of country commitments made at 2022 Transforming Education Summit found very few were addressing WoG approaches and the recent survey of [country actions to Transform Education Towards SDG4](#) only one-quarter of UNESCO member states were even discussing WoG/inter-ministry coordination. We hope that our discussions can generate practical ideas for countries to adapt and adopt.

the UN Secretary General has been a leader in many of these discussions. The [vision statement](#) preceding the 2022 Transforming Education Summit, the follow up [HLSC guidance note](#) and the [paper](#) prepared on transforming education systems for the 2024 Summit on the Future provide critical guidance for countries. We should be following the discussions facilitated by [UN country coordination teams](#) as best we can.

Consequently, FRESH Partners EDC and ISHN invited several organizations and individuals to a web meeting to explore cooperation in promoting whole of government approaches and building capacities for inter-ministry coordination. The meeting reached consensus on several ideas and potential actions as reflected in the notes below. If you are interested in learning more or in joining these discussions, contact dmccall@internationalschoolheal.th.org

The webinar series

The series will first clarify terms that are currently being used inter-changeably. The terms used to discuss intersectoral cooperation can be confusing and vague. The same terms are often used in different ways with different meanings. These terms include:

- Intersectoral cooperation (or coordination)?
- Multisectoral approaches (or programs or initiatives or policies or practices or structures)
- Whole of government or joined up government
- Inter-ministry, inter-agency or inter-professional coordination

- Whole of society or whole of community
- Cooperation or coordination or information sharing or collaboration?
- Intra-sector, intra-ministry coordination
- Top down, bottom up, middle-focused or outside-in strategies?

Current developments in WoG approaches are mostly conceptual providing overviews and directions but lacking practical applications. Or they are highly focused on specific issues and needs but often do not generalize to other applications or build transferable knowledge.

It is suggested that we favour the development practical, yet strategic, mechanisms, tactics, structures, practices, policies etc. that are illustrated with real world examples and blueprints. See Sub-Appendix Two for draft lists of these for school-based approaches. Similar lists can be developed for other settings or sectors.

Secondly, the series of webinars will offer a series of session that will share and build our knowledge on WoG/IC knowledge and experiences. Here is a general overview that the series could start with as a draft.

A whole-of-government (WofG) strategy or approach has public service ministries and agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to specific issues. Approaches can be formal and informal. They can focus on policy development, program management and service delivery. WofG processes may be broadly and comprehensively applied, or may be highly specific, or targeted. WofG processes may be informal or formal. That is, they may either carry authority or consist of nothing more than a ‘gentlemen’s agreement’. In this summary, we define a whole of government approach as a decision and action plan that requires government ministries and their agencies and employees to coordinate their policies, programs and services. Other terms have been used to capture the same idea of WofG approaches. These include “joined-up government” actions and “horizontal management”. The term has been applied to a wide variety of social and economic programs and initiatives. A [United Nations paper on WofG approaches](#) notes that this harmonization of government efforts requires: strong leadership, policy and mandate coordination, the capacity to bring together all departments and key stakeholders, the appointment of a senior officials with authority on inter-ministry boundaries, the establishment of a coordinating body within government, the ability to overcome differences in visions, priorities and terminologies, interoperability of systems, personnel, funding mechanisms and more.

A Whole of Government (WoG) approach should extend across and within all ministries concerned with the education, health & development of children, adolescents and young adults. Several systems changes are required to align and sustain these IPPCF frameworks. These include:

- an over-arching policy on child & adolescent development,

- laws and regulations on the mandates of several ministries on working with and within schools,
- the active support of first ministers,
- establishing inter-ministry coordination mechanisms,
- comprehensive agreements between ministries,
- jointly named inter-ministry coordinators,
- joint budgeting,
- joint sector reviews,
- shared accountability systems and other actions.