

SPARKS Network Working Groups

During the 2nd day of the meeting the participants split into four different working group to discuss the following themes: 1. systematic reviews, 2. generic protocols for social protection mapping and epidemiological research, 3. generic protocols for intervention studies and 4. access barriers to social protection and fundamental needs for conditions other than tuberculosis. Based on discussions from the break-out groups during day 2 of the SPARKS meeting, it was proposed to create five **Working Groups** to facilitate joint activities of the SPARKS members research teams and identify common approaches and metrics. SPARKS members are encouraged to contact the secretariat if they would like to form an additional working group.

Table 1: Working Group topics, chairs, UN focal person and aim

Working Group	Chair	UN Focal Person	Aim
Systematic Reviews	Delia Boccia & Tom Wingfield	Enos Masini	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify a list of priority research questions that can be tackled through systematic reviews and meta-analysis by independent teams of researchers working under the same research framework 2. Develop a common plan for the data extraction and data gathering strategy so to ensure consistency of methods across the various teams 3. Design a portal for data repository that can be shared across teams working on different subjects
Social Protection Program Mapping	Debora Pedrazzoli & Priya Shete	Amy Collins & Nobu Nishikiori	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and disseminate existing social protection mapping results from TB and non-TB partners in high-burden countries, including through development of a common platform for updating and sharing mapping results. 2. Develop a common framework for categorizing country capacity based on existing social protection programs and health/economic/demographic characteristics and translating to potential categories of social protection interventions. 3. Establishing a set of indicators or metrics that countries should report on that reflect salient operational aspects of implementing social protection for TB.
Intervention Studies	Knut Lönnroth	Diana Weil	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Map ongoing and planned intervention studies 2. Identify common methodological approaches across studies and stimulate

Working Group	Chair	UN Focal Person	Aim
			further harmonization to enable effective evidence synthesis 3. Stimulate cross-learning between projects
Patient Cost Surveys	Kerri Viney & Nguyen Binh Hoa	Andrew Siroka & Ines Garcia Baena	1. Promotion and design implementation of patient cost surveys 2. Advance methodological discussions amongst experts
Access barriers to social protection and fundamental needs for conditions other than TB	Kristi Sidney Annerstedt	Leah Prencipe or Tia Maria Palermo	1. Initiate the expansion of the SPARKS network beyond TB related research. 2. Assess the access barriers to social protection and fundamental needs for other conditions (starting with non-communicable diseases)

Purpose of the working groups: The aim of these groups is enable SPARKS Network members with similar interests to participate in collaborative efforts and leverage the network to further the SPARKS agenda in that particular area of interest.

Chairs: The initial chairs were nominated by the SPARKS Secretariat. An individual will remain a chair for 18 months, where then another individual will be nominated and voted on by the working group.

Responsibilities include:

1. Ensuring the projects meet the objectives of the working group
2. Monitor progress of the various groups (by contacting the head of each sub-project at defined intervals of time)
3. Facilitate communication and knowledge exchange of the various teams through regular contact time (i.e. quarterly working group calls)
4. Disseminate summaries of lessons learnt and achievements across the group members to maintain a sense of belonging to the group

They will also be responsible for planning and facilitating virtual meetings to discuss methodological issues, joint funding opportunities, or update progress.

Focal points: SPARKS members from partner UN agencies (e.g. WHO and UNICEF) will be invited for each of the working groups. The focal points will collaborate with the chair to establish the objective of the group as well as be an active participant.

Working group members: All SPARKS network members are eligible to participate in one or several working groups of their own choosing and participation is strictly on a voluntary basis. They should contact the chair of the working group if they are interested in participating.

Getting started:

If you are interested in participating in *existing* projects, please contact the chair of the specific working group you are interested in.

If you are interested in creating a *new* sub-project in a particular working group, please:

1. Identify an area or subject you would like to contribute with and summarise this into a short abstract (1/2 page).
2. Reach out directly to the chair and submit the abstract. In your email please include: i. your interest and level of desired participation; ii. what type of support you would need from the working group to undertake your proposal (i.e. financial, intellectual, operational); and iii) whether or not you have a timeline or a specific plan to perform the proposed activity

Recommended process for the working groups: People interested in joining the working groups will be contacted by the respective chairs to share the objectives of the working group and be informed on how the working group will be run. While each group will function differently to meet their own needs, we recommend meeting virtually at least once a quarter to discuss the progress of the work and then as needed. The Secretariat is in the process of developing a platform that will help facilitate these virtual working groups.