

## Value of management education to enhance health systems

Publications from the Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) conference included a welcome focus on the building of effective global health education programmes. Historically, health-worker education has occurred mainly in schools of medicine, nursing, and public health. Progress has been achieved in increasing the capabilities of such institutions in developing countries. As health systems become increasingly complex, however, the importance of management capabilities has come into sharp focus.<sup>1</sup> Health professionals are often promoted to leadership roles, yet specific skillsets needed for the running of these systems are not part of their clinical training.<sup>2</sup> Many educational institutions are not equipped to impart the transformative leadership and management capabilities needed to run increasingly complex organisations, particularly in resource-constrained settings facing faculty shortages.<sup>3</sup> Partnerships between health professional education institutions and specialised management and business schools could be very valuable. Since many of the best management and business schools in developing countries are private (mostly non-profit) institutions, collaboration will entail public-private partnerships.

Some health-worker education organisations offer leadership training, but these organisations do not generally use business school faculties or result in degrees for trainees.

Much as focus has shifted from in-service to preservice physician, nurse, and midwife capacity building, management training with business schools should now be considered.

High quality business schools foster innovation, raising capacity of systems to harness advances in technology and workforce support. These schools help generate effective change and promote strategic planning and operations. The schools emphasise teamwork, critical thinking, and a student-centred focus to learning, similar to the best health professional schools following the 21st century educational framework laid out by Frenk and colleagues.<sup>4</sup> Business schools adapt curricula to real-world problems, including use of local teaching cases. The best business schools embrace multidisciplinary approaches, and emphasis is on practice rather than theory. Innovation is taught as a process that entails failure, from which lessons that increase later success can be drawn.<sup>5,6</sup> Effective implementation, a growing area of scientific enquiry<sup>7</sup> in global health,<sup>8</sup> is considered a key outcome.

Health outcomes can be improved if advantage is taken of the capabilities of these schools. The Leading High-Performing Healthcare Organizations program of the Strathmore Business School<sup>9</sup> (Nairobi, Kenya), launched with the US Agency for International Development support in 2011, provides some examples. As with any education that exchanges students between high-income and low-income country settings, ethical frameworks should be followed.<sup>10</sup> Schools of management and business have much to offer educational

teams working to increase availability and quality of health workers to strengthen health systems around the world.

We declare no competing interests.

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Guy Pfeffermann, \*Ann Kurth  
akurth@nyu.edu

Global Business School Network, Washington, DC, USA (GP); and New York University Global Institute of Public Health, New York University, New York, NY, USA (AK)

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