

# Strengthening Preservice Education Institutions: Strategies for Scaling Up Health Worker Production

## BACKGROUND

To address global health worker shortages, we need innovative strategies to increase the production of health professionals. These platforms should make use of existing resources such as improving school management, innovative financing, engaging the private sector, and working with faith-based organizations and the private sector to increase output of health workers in existing preservice education institutions.

## IMPROVING HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

In the past, most health professional school reform has focused on curriculum improvement and faculty development. Although these approaches may improve the quality of graduates, they rarely result in an increase in the number of graduates. Senior leaders at health training schools often lack management and business skills, and as a result, the schools are not as efficient as they could be.

CapacityPlus will lead an initiative to scale up production of health workers via improved management efficiency of health professional schools. CapacityPlus has assembled a Global Advisory Board of recognized experts that will provide diverse perspectives on ways to assess and address critical managerial challenges in health professional schools in developing countries.

## INNOVATIVE FINANCING

In Africa alone it is estimated that it will cost \$26.4 billion over the next 10 years to educate the 1.5 million additional health workers that the WHO has estimated would be required. New sources of funding must be identified for health worker education. Such potential sources include alumni and Diaspora contributions, subsidies from clinical care, endowment campaigns, local development funds, gifts-in-kind, matching funds, private for-profit investments, private foundations, religious communities, research funding, tuition fees, and microdonations.

One example of such an effort to tap into new funding sources is CapacityPlus's participation in GlobalGiving.com's Open Challenge in September 2010, which raised over \$4,000 through microdonations. These cash contributions will pay for tuition for clinical officers at the Malamulo College of Health Sciences in Malawi.

## ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

In some African countries, private sector health care providers account for approximately 50% of all formal health care delivered. Furthermore, in many countries the private sector is a significant

consumer/provider of health services for its workers. The private sector also plays an important role in training health workers, but how significant this contribution is and how to encourage greater participation has not been adequately addressed.

In collaboration with the International Finance Corporation, *CapacityPlus* is participating in an assessment of the role of the private sector in increasing the number and capacity of health workers. This assessment will identify key issues that need to be addressed to increase this role, as appropriate. Once completed, this assessment will draw policy-makers' attention to the potential for the private sector to contribute to the development of the health workforce, as well as highlight the obstacles and success factors related to private sector investment in this area.

## **LINKING WITH FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS**

Faith-based schools have an excellent record of training health workers that serve in rural areas. They are more likely than public sector schools to be located outside the capital city, have clinical training sites in underserved communities, and are able to recruit students with rural backgrounds and a high degree of social service commitment. With governance oversight provided by their sponsoring institutions and a traditional emphasis on thrift, faith-based schools often are able to produce competent health workers who deliver services outside urban areas more efficiently than their public sector counterpart institutions. In addition, because they are not fully funded by the public sector health system, they are usually more agile in making major operational changes such as changing faculty models, modifying wage schedules, and taking advantage of cost efficiencies. Additionally, faith-based schools can tap into resources from their sponsoring institutions. Most faith-based health professional schools in developing countries have a relationship with sister-faith institutions in the developed world. These institutions are potential sources of funding, technical assistance, and gifts-in-kind.

*CapacityPlus* is currently working to identify faith-based health professional schools that are interested in scaling up health worker production.

## **IDENTIFYING PRESERVICE EDUCATION "BEST BUYS" APPROACH**

When schools consider scaling up their production of health workers, they may encounter bottlenecks in some or all of these categories. Eliminating bottlenecks is key to scaling up the production of health workers. *CapacityPlus*'s "best buys" approach helps make the most cost-effective investments in training more health workers. Inclusion of some of the best buys can be done most cost effectively when strategic investments are made in schools with a small number of bottlenecks.

*CapacityPlus* is working to identify appropriate schools in order to identify their bottlenecks and make strategic investments for the most cost-effective scaling-up to meet the goal of producing 140,000 additional health workers.