

Human Resources for Health Initiatives at the WHO Country Office for India

By WHO Country Office for India



A critical ingredient for building an effective and responsive health system is the health workforce which includes physicians, nurses, public health workers, policy makers, administrators, public health educators, pharmacists and health managers amongst others both in the public and private health sectors. Health workers make a remarkable contribution to human health and development. They are essential to fulfilling national health and development goals such as the MDGs and the objectives of the National Rural Health Mission and National Health Policy 2002. They save lives. Without them, advances in health care cannot reach those most in need. Preventing and treating diseases require assessment, delivery and monitoring by health

workers. At the same time, in addressing the emerging health needs of the population, the health workforce is confronted by issues of shortages, skewed distribution, quality, accountability, weak capacity, work overload, inadequate growth opportunities, motivation, lack of adequate data, public-private coordination, migration and the complexity of service provision to large and diverse populations. It is a growing challenge to maintain the needed numbers, quality, mix and distribution of workers to satisfy the healthcare needs of the entire population. Unfortunately, this situation is particularly accentuated for those who are most vulnerable to disease and ill health.

While various attempts are underway by multitude of stake-

holders to address these issues, it is recognized that there is a need to strengthen evidence for informed policy decision-making and the monitoring of progress in the area of human resources in the health sector, so as to support the health system. With this in view, the WHO Country Office for India, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India and other stakeholders has engaged in various initiatives. The nature of initiatives undertaken include, provision of technical support for conduct of studies and documentation; development of guidelines; workshops and trainings.

More details are available at:
http://whoindia.org/EN/Section2/Section404_1264.htm

Asian Consultation

Education for Global Health Leadership

4-5 November 2008, Vietnam *By Dr. Sarath Samarage*

The Asian Consultation on Education for Global Health Leadership Sponsored by the China Medical Board and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and organized by the Hanoi School of Public Health was held in Hanoi Vietnam, from 4-5 November 2008. It was attended by 30 participants from ten countries: Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, China, Cambodia, Bangladesh, India, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, and the United States. The AAAH was represented by Dr. Sarath Samarage, Member of the AAAH Steering Committee and the AAAH Focal point for Sri Lanka.

Three examples were presented on innovations in networking for capacity building—the Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance (MBDS) Network; the Asia-Pacific Action Alliance on Human Resources for Health (AAAH); and the South East Asian Public Health Education Institutes Network (SEAPHEIN).

Dr. Sarath Samarage presenting the AAAH as a case study for innovations in networking for capacity building said, the vision of AAAH is to strengthen human resources for health (HRH) planning and management capacity for adequate, equitable, efficient, and effective HRH and health systems in the Asia-Pacific region that promote health equity and quality improvement. The AAAH Secretariat is currently based at the International Health Policy Program, Thailand. The priority areas of AAAH are: 1) advocacy and support for strengthening of member country HRH planning and management; 2) information for monitoring of the HRH situation; 3) knowledge generation, management and sharing; 4) capacity strengthening; and 5) coordination of technical support requested by a member country. The organization works closely with relevant UN agencies. In summarizing their experience, Dr. Samarage noted that first and foremost innovation is about personal competencies and attitudes, about selling ideas to the right people, in the right place, at the right time. Networks are necessary to help build trust and momentum for 'risky' ventures and to obtain the perspectives needed to create successful innovations.