

WHO/WFME strategic partnership to improve medical education

WHO and the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) propose to form a strategic partnership to pursue a long-term work plan – open to participation by all medical schools and other educational providers – intended to have a decisive impact on medical education in particular and ultimately on health professions education in general. The WHO/WFME work plan will benefit from the accumulated experience and assets of each partner and will result in:

- A shared database that will include up-to-date experience in implementing quality-improvement processes in medical schools
- Access, via the database, to information on specific schools and in particular to a description of their approach to quality improvement
- Promoting twinning between schools and other institutions in processes to foster innovative education
- Means to update the management of medical schools
- Identification and analysis, by WHO regions, of innovations in medical education in order to help define appropriate lines of work for each region
- Assistance to institutions or national/regional organizations and agencies in developing and implementing reform programmes or establishing recognition/accreditation systems
- A review of good practices in medical education that can serve as examples and as a source for further innovation.

The strategic partnership will also address other crucial questions that medical schools now face, such as improving their leadership function. Through a systematic dialogue, the partners will pursue the work plan and provide useful information to medical schools worldwide.

The strategic partnership is another outgrowth of WHO's strong commitment to supporting Member States' efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (<http://www.who.int/mdg/en/>), which were adopted at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in September 2000. A major thrust of the MDGs is improved health status, towards which human resources for health will make a crucial contribution. But in order to contribute optimally, the health workforce must receive the best possible educational preparation.

Planning and providing high-quality human resources education demands the active participation of medical schools and other providers of medical education and training, since physicians are important to any model of a health team for developing and developed countries alike. WHO and the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) have been working together since 1972 towards improving medical education worldwide.

There is no single path towards improving the quality of medical education. Each region and country features different approaches that must be acknowledged, explored and brought to wider use. But to achieve significant and lasting results, institutions must be committed to an ongoing process of quality development. The WHO/WFME strategic partnership aims to foster this commitment.

Hans Karle
President
World Federation for Medical Education

Orvill Adams
Director, HRH/EIP
World Health Organization

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