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Thank you.

Community, national and global solidarity for health

This issue of the Africa Health Journal (AHJ) builds on our continuing commitment to support the movement towards accelerated achievement of SDGs by African countries in solidarity with regional and global partners. We argue that the solidarity for this movement is founded on our common humanity and natural tendency to care for each other and to work collectively to respond to our shared needs, leaving no one behind.

The lead articles are on community health systems, which are the foundation for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) that provides Primary Health Care (PHC). Often, how to plan and manage health services at this level is not accorded the priority that it deserves and effective mechanisms for these community health systems are not given due attention, resulting in critical gaps in coverage. The main reason for this neglect of community health systems is the current overemphasis on what and who makes profits instead of on sharing better the resources available to society. The emphasis should be about equity and social justice, underpinned by the integration of health and wellbeing into all aspects of governance of society.

This issue has an article that discusses frontline health workers who are the vehicle for operationalising community health systems for Primary Health Care. These health workers need to be equipped with the right skills, motivated, accessible to all the population and supported by the community as an integral part of the national health workforce. The partnership between communities and frontline health workers is what is needed for preparedness and response to emerging and re-emerging health disorders as well as infectious diseases outbreaks. This

is discussed in the article from the WHO Regional Office for Africa in this issue.

The journal also discusses a number of topics that are relevant to the reduction of premature mortality and morbidity, especially in children in Africa. These are malaria, sickle cell disease and rheumatic heart disease. Malaria is a regular topic in every issue of the journal but sickle cell disease and rheumatic heart disease have been discussed by invited experts. These conditions are common among all communities in Africa and it is essential that frontline health workers are equipped with the skills and resources to manage them as near to the households as possible. It is also important for the general population and their leaders to be educated on these diseases in order to promote appropriate cultural and health-seeking behaviour.

Resources need to be mobilised for strengthening African health systems for UHC and PHC. The global community has recommended prioritising increased use of domestic resources for this. Donor support will continue to play an important role as domestic resources become available. It is for this reason that the Global Financing Facility hosted by the World Bank is discussed in this issue as an example of how community participation and fund-pooling by donors are central to the programme objectives. This approach links well with strengthening community health systems and the health workforce.



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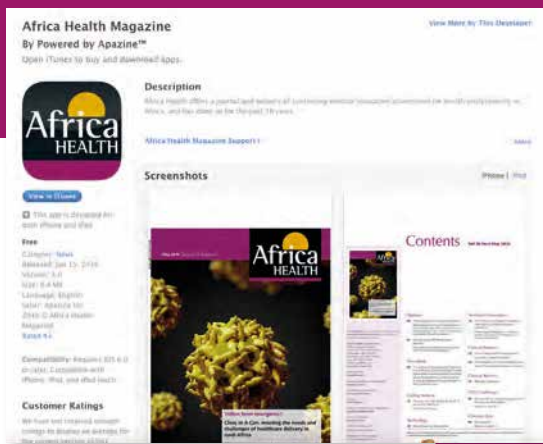
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