

# Enhancing interprofessional collaboration and learning for Primary Health Care

Elsie Kiguli-Malwadde reports on the TUFH Virtual Conference 2021

The virtual 2021 conference of The Network: Towards Unity for Health (TUFH) was titled 'Enhancing inter-professional collaboration and learning for strengthening primary health care', was co-hosted by the Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing, Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), whose mission is to improve individuals, families and community's health status through excellent education, research and services.

The meeting was attended by 431 participants, of whom 186 were students. All seven regions of WHO were represented. There were 50 sessions over four days, comprising of multiple workshops, keynote sessions, oral and poster presentations, documentaries among others which were edited and published on the tufh.org website. Also exhibited were three Student Network Organization (SNO) cultural exchanges.

As a result of TUFH 2021, TUFH collectively declared that it will work towards inclusiveness, social accountability principles, interprofessional practice and education, and health equity in the following manner:

**Inclusive policies** are defined by:

- 1) A global effort of caring for each other by returning humanity to health care including community voices, culture, lived experiences, empathy, and understanding.
- 2) Improved partnerships and collaborations with global and regional associations and institutions that are aligned in strategies, efforts, and initiatives.
- 3) Increased collaboration and inclusion of non-health sectors.

**Social accountability/responsibility** is defined by:

- 1) The structural adoption and implementation of Social Accountability/Responsibility where health systems respond to people's health needs as informed by community input;
- 2) Support Health Institutions to self-assess and become verified as a Social Accountability Institution leading to continual improvement and increasing their ability to attract undergraduates, postgraduates and faculty from all over the planet;
- 3) Proactively engage with entities, globally and nationally, which model health accreditation standards that incorporate social accountability/responsibility principles and standards;
- 4) Inspire students to engage with visionary leadership at academic institutions and pentagram partners to adopt social accountability/responsibility principles into policies at their institutions and proactively.
- 5) Build upon the current knowledge base to provide

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tools for health institutions to specify and measure their societal impact and incorporate innovative learner assessments that measure community engagement.

- 6) Share, publish and distribute new knowledge from members through TUFH academies and publications.

**Regional interprofessional education and team based care** are defined by:

- 1) Collective development of practical solutions to underlying health issues framed within the Sustainable Development Goals and Social Determinants of Health;
- 2) A health system based on people's needs that must involve all key players within the context of where people live and work. The process includes: further information about corruption drivers and incentives; creating networks and referral systems with help of government and non-government organisations (connecting common interests); improved partnerships and collaborations with global and regional associations and institutions that are aligned in strategies, efforts, and initiatives; Technology advances to enhance opportunities for shared education for academics, health workers, and students regionally and around the world;
- 3) Clear understanding of what each health care professional within a workforce team does to ensure optimal patient outcomes and collaboration; understanding roles, learning, listening;
- 4) Supportive health practitioners (e.g. Community Health Workers) who are clearly defined, engaged, competently trained, certified, and represented in health workforce policies and practices;
- 5) A new generation of health clinicians whose skills include competencies that address and are responsive to community needs;
- 6) Broadening the workforce beyond the core health professions to incorporate social scientists and other professionals who work with us in communities to tackle primary health challenges;
- 7) Involving students in Interprofessional Education and Team Based Care to develop initiatives and learn together with other health professions;
- 8) Host regional mini-conferences to learn with and from each other and curate new knowledge to share across regions and globally;
- 9) Collect data on the impact and value of Interprofessional Education and intersectoral Collaboration on health care delivery and patient outcomes; more research collaboration across different health sectors.