THE CHALLENGE

Half the world’s people—and especially the most vulnerable—lack access to essential healthcare services because of weak grassroots health systems. As a result, many die from a range of serious but treatable conditions from pneumonia to malaria, diabetes to diarrhea, birth complications to mental health disorders. The adverse effects ripple through entire societies, leading to family distress and lost productivity. They ultimately undermine countries’ economic growth and and people’s ability to thrive.

THE SOLUTION

Extensive research shows that the most effective and equitable health care systems globally are built on a strong foundation of community-based teams providing quality primary health care (PHC) to everyone across the entire life span. Easy access to PHC services can dramatically reduce overall morbidity and mortality. For that reason, countries around the world recently signed on to renew their commitment to improving PHC as a key part of the United Nations global effort toward health for all.

For two decades, the Global Health Collaborative (GHC) has been dedicated to ensuring that everyone, everywhere, has access to quality PHC. We work with countries to build strong, sustainable systems that increase access to these services for underserved populations worldwide.

PROGRAM STATUS

The GHC operates primarily in southern Africa and Southeast Asia, launching programs in Vietnam in 2001 and in Lesotho in 2003, then expanding over the last decade to Laos, Cambodia, and most recently Myanmar.

We form long-term partnerships with ministries of health, universities, hospitals, and civil society organizations dedicated to PHC improvement. Together, we have built networks of champion PHC educators and training sites, innovative models of clinical service delivery, and outcomes-based assessment programs. We have managed more than $18 million in grants supporting our country programs and leveraged even more. For example, we assisted Vietnam in securing a $121 million World Bank loan to scale up our programs nationally, resulting in nearly 9,000 additional workers trained in PHC.
We have learned that comprehensive PHC requires a different and more integrated approach than is possible with programs that focus on a single disease such as HIV or TB. At GHC, we have crafted a unique blueprint for developing PHC systems that focuses first on building human capital and empowering local institutions.

We seek support to:

- **Build countries’ human capacity**
  - Work with in-country medical educators to establish programs and structures for training fully competent, frontline PHC teams
  - Create and strengthen national credentialing mechanisms and establish continuing professional development programs

- **Initiate new models for PHC clinical services**
  - Design and help create new facilities that showcase high-quality clinical-service delivery focused on addressing local needs and providing comprehensive, whole person-centered PHC
  - Integrate new technologies, including health information systems, innovative diagnostic tools, and electronic health records into PHC
  - Use these models to enable health care managers to apply best practices for supportive supervision, facility operations, and reporting

- **Mobilize support for PHC**
  - Partner with governments and ministries of health to drive health system reform through better PHC policies, financing, and legislation
  - Establish civil society organizations dedicated to working with governments and advocating for PHC reforms
  - Pursue public- and private-sector funding for PHC to help in-country partners secure financing from bilateral and multilateral development organizations

We rigorously monitor and evaluate these strategies to determine what is working and what is not, assess new innovations, and disseminate results to continuously inform long-term PHC improvement efforts.

**FUNDING PRIORITIES**

We entered the MacArthur Foundation 100&Change competition seeking resources to (1) grow our current programs, (2) expand to new partner countries such as Kenya and Malawi, (3) establish regional collaborative centers in Asia and Africa, and (4) establish a global engine for accelerating PHC development. Grants of any size are very important to us and our in-country partners. With GHC’s approach, every dollar invested now will yield dividends for many years into the future.

Some possibilities:

- $1 million allows a country to initiate specific PHC improvements, backed by technical support focusing on one of the core elements in the GHC blueprint
- $5 million enables a country to enact a comprehensive PHC development program, addressing all core elements of the GHC blueprint to fully prime its system for future transformational PHC investments
- $10 million supports multiple countries by establishing Regional Networks for PHC Development, a unique mechanism for empowering champions from around the world to advocate for and implement local improvements in PHC.

**BUILDING ON MOMENTUM**

We’ve made significant progress in advancing PHC globally, but there is still much more to do. With increasing numbers of countries around the world now looking to better the health of their people through PHC, our expertise is needed now more than ever: few global organizations have experience in long-term, large-scale PHC development. At this critical time, your support will help us bring these essential services to underserved populations around the world, ensuring easy access and sustainable care for generations to come.

For more information, please visit bu.edu/ghc/.