

Leadership for Health Programme for Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean: An Initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO)

Introductory Note

1 Background and rationale

WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office has a longstanding tradition of promoting leadership program in public health. The WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean has reaffirmed his commitment to reestablish a leadership program that addresses the current gap in public health leadership in the Region.

Why a programme on leadership for health? First, strong leadership that upholds the values and principles of public health is a critical determinant of health development. Second, there is a scarcity of adequately trained public health leaders in responsible positions in many Member States. Third, most long and short term public health training programs place more emphasis on the acquisition of technical skills than leadership competencies. Fourth, and perhaps most important, a lack of political will has been identified as a fundamental factor underpinning the under-performance of health systems and their impact on public health. The answer to the lack of political will rests in effective leadership in public health.

What does WHO intend to do in the area of leadership in health? WHO intends to strengthen leadership in public health for public health professionals of the Region by developing a program that is sensitive to the changes and challenges facing global as well as local public health. Prominent among these are (i) the prevailing geopolitical and socioeconomic challenges in the region and their influence on public health and health system development; (ii) the changing demographic and epidemiologic profile in countries of the region and increasing awareness of populations; (iii) the vital role of civil society and the for-profit private sector in public health; (iv) the importance of social determinants of health, multi-sectorality and the need to build partnerships with different stakeholders; (v) the increasingly important role of non-medical as well as non-health professionals as leaders in public health; and (vi) the increasing importance of globalization and health as well as the growing importance of global health diplomacy.

2 Aim

The aim of the Leadership for Health Programme in public health is to establish a critical mass of public health leaders who are capable of addressing health system challenges that arise from the mounting global public health imperatives.

3 Leadership competencies

The acquisition of leadership competencies¹ is essential for attaining the above-mentioned outcomes. Leadership competencies are the technical and behavioral characteristics that leaders must possess to be successful in positions of leadership across health professions or in professions and areas of work where health is an important goal. The leadership competencies will be in the following domains:²

¹ Competency is defined as knowledge or skill of an individual or organization that has been shown to cause or predict outstanding performance. A collection of competencies make up a behavioral roadmap that is directly related to both individual and organizational performance. ¹ Janet Place. Competency Assessment. Tier 1 Public Health Professionals. North Carolina Public Health Academy, University of North Carolina; January 2012

² Adapted from - Development of a Core Competency Model for the Master of Public Health Degree; *Am J Public Health*. 2008

- Leadership and leading the change.
- Politics of health and wellbeing and political analysis.
- Organizational dynamics and change management.
- Team building and conflict resolution.
- Systems thinking and problem solving with emphasis on health systems strengthening.

4 Structure and duration

Proposed Dates	Duration	Location	Module/Segment	Activities
Travel from Home Country to Geneva, Switzerland				
January 23-24	2 days	WHO HQ Geneva	Introductory module	- Introduction to Leadership for Health Programme, Regional priorities, about WHO - Development of a policy/leadership paper
January 26-30	5 days		WHO Executive Board/Cluster visits	- Observe proceedings of the WHO Executive Board - Visit Clusters/Departments in WHO HQ
February 2-3	2 days		Health Diplomacy	- Global Health Diplomacy module offered by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva
February 4-5	2 days		Communication module	- Public speaking, media debriefing etc.
Travel from Geneva, Switzerland to Muscat, Oman				
February 8-18	11 days	Muscat, Oman	Health Policy Transformation	- Health systems module [Feb 8-12] - Leadership and Management module [Feb 14-18] [Offered by Harvard School of Public Health] - Program Evaluation
February 19				- Departure
Travel to Home Country				
February 22 to March 30	5 weeks	Home Country	Back to parent organization	- Develop and submit policy paper

5 Program deliverables

- 25 public health leaders from the WHO Region for the Eastern Mediterranean will complete the program every year.
- Fully developed Leadership for Health Program with course materials.
- Strengthened capacity of institutions of the region in the area of leadership and public health.