



WHEC UPDATE

Briefings of worldwide activity of Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC)

July 2009; Vol. 4, No. 7

Before and After Issue

Our network is expanding fast. Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC) is a place where we all connect – we connect to improve maternal and child health worldwide, and we connect to each other. Anyone, anywhere can make a positive difference. You don't need a title to be a leader in life. And the simple fact of having a title won't make you a leader. Anyone can learn to be a leader and help to shape or influence the world around them. Genuine leadership – leadership with a “little I” – is not conferred by a title or limited to the executive suites. Rather, it is shown through our everyday actions and the way we influence the lives of those around us. It is about the small things each of us can do every day to positively influence our patients, our colleagues, our friends, and our communities. In my experience, the marks in life we leave – our legacies – are most often left not in stone and steel, in history and politics, or poetry and literature, but in the lives of other people. You aspire to lead if you want to take control of your life; make your organization better; seize new opportunities; improve the service your patients receive; influence others to be their best; solve problems; contribute to the betterment of others and make the world a little better. And you don't need a title to do it. Serving in anyway is admirable – and it is important that we are willing to do so. But when we have unique skills and passions, we can have an even greater impact if we look at the ways we can contribute that will do the most good. When you make the world better for others – you make the world better for yourself. Leadership is influence.

Mastering leadership, too is a life long process. All of us can learn to lead better; none of us ever truly master leadership. Each of our lives is a leadership lab, we don't need a title, or an organization – to lead. What we need is nothing more nor less than a burning desire to make a positive difference and an awareness of the opportunities to lead that present themselves each day – at work, at home, with our friends and within our communities. Genuine, authentic leadership infuses meaning into your life, because you know that your efforts count and that you are serving the needs of others as well as your own. All of us have the power to shape our lives and influence the lives of others. I hope that some of the ideas in **WomensHealthSection.com** and *WHEC Update* will help you to make a positive difference and build a better world. Everyone makes a difference – the choice we all have is whether we want to make a positive difference or a negative one. Leadership means service.

How can you best contribute to others?

Mastering Leadership

Rita Luthra, MD

Your Questions, Our Reply:

Is universal health care in the form of mandatory health insurance feasible given the federal system and autonomy of the states in USA?

Exploring the Universal Coverage: Designing and implementing a health financing policy for universal coverage is relatively simple in principle but complex in practice. A strong majority thinks everyone should have health insurance that support erodes once you talk about cost. At the state-level there is currently an attempt in Massachusetts to provide the universal health coverage to all the residents in the state and the program is having teething problems. It bodes well for providing something like this to the population as a whole. Mandatory individual insurance alone is a clumsy solution, but a lot of people will argue we already have centralized national programs. California has tried to provide universal care, but that proposal, for a mandatory system, unfortunately has not made through the legislature. Massachusetts has started with very low rates of health insurance. With a more thoroughly covered population, there will always be the problem of limited state fiscal resources. States have little ability to run deficits, even in recessions, which means state-level health programs are vulnerable to a downturn.

The global financial crisis has created an environment that is more favorable to government intervention, social protection and health reform in the United States of America than in recent years. There is broad agreement on outline of the plan unlike in 1993, when President Bill Clinton was elected with no clear mandate or vision for healthcare reform. For the current administration all the pieces are in place for a quick decision. Legislation could be drafted within weeks, though this would not come into force until 2010 or 2011. There are four pieces to this plan: a community rating, to prevent 'cherry-picking' by private insurers; subsidies to help lower-income people afford insurance; a form of mandatory insurance for children; and government-run plans so people can opt out of private insurance.

Many people think such a federal health insurance system would eventually merge with Medicare and Medicaid to form a larger national system. We hope it moves more quickly in the chosen direction. With a more thoroughly covered population, there will always be the problem of limited state fiscal resources.

About NGO Association with the UN:

UN Partner on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
A Gateway to the UN System's Work on MDGs

UNFPA – UN Population Fund

Stepping up efforts to save mothers' lives

UNFPA's work in the fields of reproductive health and rights, women's empowerment and population issues is at the core of the achievement of the MDGs. Poverty cannot and will not be eradicated without also achieving the ICPD goals. Universal access to education and reproductive health care are crucial steps that can help individuals break out of cycles of poverty. Reproductive rights are central to women's empowerment and empowered women are the key to healthier and more productive families, communities and countries. The ICPD commitment and the Millennium Development Goals are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Every minute, another woman dies in childbirth. Every minute, the loss of a mother shatters a family and threatens the well-being of surviving children. For every woman who dies, 20 or more experience serious complications. These range from chronic infections to disabling injuries such as [obstetric fistula](#). Maternal death and disability rates mirror the huge discrepancies that exist between the haves and the have-nots both within and between countries.

Of the more than 500,000 women who die during pregnancy or childbirth, 90 per cent occur in Africa and Asia. The majority of women are dying from severe bleeding, infections, eclampsia, obstructed labor and the consequences of unsafe abortions--all preventable causes for which we have highly effective interventions. Working for the survival of mothers is a human rights imperative. It also has enormous socio-economic ramifications – and is a crucial international development priority. Both the International Conference on Population and Development and Millennium Development Goals call for a 75 per cent reduction in maternal mortality between 1990 and 2015. This three-pronged strategy is key to the accomplishment of the goal:

- All women have access to contraception to avoid unintended pregnancies
- All pregnant women have access to skilled care at the time of birth
- All those with complications have timely access to quality emergency obstetric care

In countries such as China, Cuba, Egypt, Jamaica, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Tunisia, significant declines in maternal mortality have occurred as more women have gained access to family planning and skilled birth attendance with backup emergency obstetric care. Many of these countries have halved their maternal deaths in the space of a decade. Cadres of professionally trained midwives have been critical to these successes. Severe shortages of trained health providers with midwifery skills are holding back progress in many countries.

Collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO):

Mapping best practices

The WHO Reproductive Health Library

Science is cumulative. New research should be initiated on the basis of what is known, and interpretation of the findings of primary research should be made after considering existing evidence. Since 1997, the Department of Reproductive Health and Research has conducted systematic reviews on high-priority topics in maternal / perinatal health and fertility regulation to synthesize existing research findings, and has disseminated these reviews worldwide to ensure that health-care workers have access to relevant and up-to-date information. Increasingly, such reviews form the basis of normative functions. The systematic reviews conducted or facilitated by the Department are included in The Cochrane Library, The WHO Reproductive Health Library and other journals, and efforts are made to update these reviews as and when new evidence becomes available.

About The WHO Reproductive Health Library (RHL) is an electronic review journal covering the field of sexual and reproductive health. It has been published annually since 1997 by the Department of Reproductive Health and Research at the World Health Organization. RHL takes the best available evidence on sexual and reproductive health from Cochrane systematic reviews and presents it as practical actions for clinicians to take to improve health outcomes, especially in developing countries.

Details: [The WHO Reproductive Health Library](#)

Bulletin of the World Health Organization; Volume 87, Number 7, July 2009, 485-564 [Table of contents](#)

Collaboration with UN University (UNU):

UNU-WIDER (World Institute for Development Economics Research) *Expert Series on Health Economics*:

Governing Globalization: Issues and Institutions

This policy brief is intended to outline suggestions and stimulate discussion at a time when the world community is thinking about, and is engaged in, a debate on global governance. The policy brief not only focuses on the reform of existing institutions, but also proposes new institutions that are needed. It articulates a powerful new worldview and vision that are critical for any efforts to develop legitimate and effective global governance rules for the first part of the twenty-first century.

A changed world: It is now more than fifty years since the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions were created. However, the world has changed dramatically during the second half of the twentieth century. The technological revolution in transport and communications has eroded the barriers of distance and time. National economies have become ever more closely integrated through cross-border flows of trade, investment and finance. In the political realm, communism has collapsed and capitalism has emerged triumphant. The context has obviously changed. But thinking about development is also very different. And there is now a myriad of new actors—from transnational firms to NGOs—participating in the global economy and polity. The concern is that the current system seems incapable of dealing with either the 'old' problems that persist or the 'new' problems that have surfaced. As we enter the twenty-first century, almost one-third of the people in the developing world, an estimated 1.2 billion, live in absolute poverty and cannot meet their basic human needs. The same number do not have access to clean water. And new problems have surfaced: the transition in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe remains grossly incomplete and has been accompanied by a large increase in mortality, poverty and inequality. The number of humanitarian crises, with their legacy of death, displacement and destruction, have risen dramatically over the past two decades. And some of the new problems are a direct consequence of globalization. The UNU/WIDER study aimed to sketch the contours of institutions and governance that would meet the needs and challenges of the twenty-first century. Drawing on contributions from among the most distinguished economists, including Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, the study provides a comprehensive examination of the governance needs of the world economy and polity.

Towards global governance: It is important to situate recommendations on global governance, through institutions and rules, in the wider context of globalization. Globalization is associated with increasing economic openness, growing economic interdependence and deepening economic integration between countries in the world economy. The process has brought about profound changes in the international context which have far reaching implications for development. Why is governance of the world economy increasingly necessary? In short, because there is an increasing gap between the global challenges and the capacity of international institutions to deal with them. While economic activity has become international and global, the jurisdiction of national rules or laws has not. Externalities—non-market consequences of production and consumption processes—increasingly spill across national boundaries, yet there are no rules to deal with the consequences. A very large proportion of countries and people have remained untouched or have been marginalized by globalization. In a national context, the state could introduce corrective measures. However, the global economy remains almost ungoverned.

Authors: Deepak Nayyar and Julius Court; Series: WIDER Policy Briefs; Project: New Roles and Functions for the UN and Bretton Woods Institutions; Sponsor: UNU-WIDER gratefully acknowledges the financial contributions to the project by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Social Policy and Development

(Details of the paper can be accessed from the link of UNU-WIDER on CME Page of WomensHealthSection.com)

Department of Management (DM):

The Department of Management provides strategic policy guidance and management support to all entities of the Secretariat in three management areas: finance, human resources and support services. These fall under the purview of the Offices of Program Planning, Budget and Accounts; Human Resources Management; and Central Support Services. The Department is responsible for formulating and implementing improved management policies in the Secretariat; the management and training of staff; program planning, budgetary, financial and human resources management; and technological innovations. It also provides technical servicing for the General Assembly's Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary), as well as servicing for the Committee for Program and Coordination. The head of the Department – the Under-Secretary-General for Management – provides policy guidance, coordination and direction for preparation of the Organization's medium-term plan and biennial budgets. She represents the Secretary-General on matters relating to management and monitors emerging management issues throughout the Secretariat. With authority delegated by the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General also ensures the efficient implementation of the Organization's internal system of justice.

Under-Secretary-General; Ms. Catherine Bertini (United States)

Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM):

The Department of General Assembly and Conference Management provides technical and secretariat support services to the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, their committees and other subsidiary bodies, and to conferences held away from Headquarters. It is responsible for the processing and issuance at Headquarters of all official documents in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish and provides interpretation services from and into these languages to intergovernmental meetings. It also produces the official records of the United Nations. The head of the Department – the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management – is responsible for the development and coordination of conference-management policies for the United Nations worldwide. He advises the President of the General Assembly on all matters relating to the session and work of the General Assembly and its General and Main Committees.

Under-Secretary-General; Mr. Chen Jian (China)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

*All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms.
(Continued)*

Article 13

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

To be continued....

Top Two-Articles Accessed in June 2009:

1. Women's Health and Human Rights;
<http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/heal/heal015.php3>
WHEC Publications. The Project was funded by WHEC Initiative for Global Health. Special thanks to WHO, World Bank, and United Nations Population Fund for the contributions.
2. Obesity and Anesthesia;
<http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/obspm/obspm008.php3>
WHEC Publications. Special thanks to Dr. Petra Kriz, Department of Anesthesia, Mercy Medical Center, Springfield, MA (USA) for helpful suggestions, review and preparation of the manuscript.

From Editor's Desk:

The United Nations Human Rights System: How To Make It Work For You

This publication, produced in conjunction with the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, gives an introduction to the United Nations system's work to promote the respect of all fundamental Human Rights and how you, as an individual or as an organization, can get involved in this work. It was produced in close collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Universal human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by law, in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law. International human rights law lays down obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups. In the following pages, you will find clear and succinct information on these international human rights principles, laws and treaties and how civil society can contribute to the work of the Human Rights bodies.

The publication is divided into three parts. Part I covers international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the nine core international human rights treaties and other international human rights instruments. Part II looks at how human rights are promoted and protected, and describes briefly the functioning of the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the General Assembly, mechanisms derived from specific treaties, and other international human rights mechanisms. Part III focuses on the role of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is hoped that this Reader will not only help inform, but also guide civil society and others who are seeking to engage with international bodies to ensure the enjoyment of all universally recognized human rights norms and principles.

Details: http://www.un-ngls.org/site/IMG/pdf/Final_logo.pdf

Special Thanks:

To our patients – it is indeed our privilege to take care of them

Words of Wisdom:

If you are sad, remember those
Who need your smile;
And you will struggle on
Another smile!

If you are worn, remember those
Who need your strength;
And steadiness will come
To you at length.

If you are dull, remember those
Who need your fun;
For laughter soothes most cares
Under the sun.

If you are lone, remember those
Who wish you near;
For thought can link up friends
Absent, but dear.

*Monthly newsletter of WHEC designed to keep you informed on
the latest UN and NGO activities*