



Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting
Geneva, Switzerland, 16 May 2010

Theme - The Commonwealth and the Health MDGs by 2015

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

HMM(G)(10)INF.3

Health Care Partnerships across the Commonwealth

Paper submitted by Building Understanding through International Links for Development
(BUILD)



BUILD, (Building Understanding through International Links for Development) as a Commonwealth accredited organisation, calls upon Health Ministers to recognise the potential for health care partnerships across the Commonwealth to meet the Millennium Development Goals and calls for political commitment and financial support by Ministers for the development of such partnerships.

BUILD was founded in 2002 and is committed to the development of partnerships between communities, particularly across the Commonwealth, for mutual learning and for peace, prosperity and justice.

BUILD, is a coalition of 45 UK based agencies working at international and intergovernmental level which has amongst its membership Commonwealth Foundation and Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council, British Council, VSO, Tropical Health and Education Trust, Local Government Association, Plan, Fairtrade Foundation, Lifeline Network International, the Scout Association, Help the Hospices.

BUILD was instrumental in the launch of an all-party parliamentary group in Westminster in 2003 which has given access to senior Ministers in DFID, Departments of Health and Education and Communities and Local Government. From this work Government commitment has funded the development of partnerships between 3,500 schools, 100 health care institutions and 350 communities in UK with counterparts in Commonwealth Africa, Asia and Caribbean.

Amongst the BUILD membership are agencies concerned with the development of health care partnerships between institutions in UK and Africa, Asia and Caribbean, including those involved in public health, hospitals, medical and nursing schools, palliative care etc.

These agencies recognise the vital role that partnerships across the Commonwealth can play in personal, professional and institutional development, in helping to build the capacity of primary and secondary care facilities, in opportunities for learning and research and helping to meet the Millennium Development Goals in particular:

- 4) reduce child mortality
- 5) improve maternal health
- 6) Combat HIV / Aids, malaria and other diseases

The Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET) has over 25 years experience supporting global Health Links, demonstrating that appropriate and carefully implemented activities aligned within the wider strategic context set by developing countries themselves can add significant value to healthcare in those countries. Out of 105 Health Links currently registered with THET, 82 are based in Commonwealth countries, with 29 of 30 grants given in round one of the International Health Links Funding Scheme going to Commonwealth Links in Africa and Asia. Links can help to strengthen health

systems and institutions through impacting on leadership and governance, public health and disease prevention, management and information systems, drug availability and distribution systems and health workforce skill-base and motivation. They may also aid recruitment, retention, education and training strategies and support research and good practice through strong evidence-based, sustainable programmes.

CASE STUDY

Mbarara University Medical School, Uganda – University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust Link. One element of this multi-disciplinary Link focuses on post-graduate medical education. Working with THET and the Royal College of Physicians, technical support has been given to a M.Med programme enabling the delivery of its specialist curriculum. Since 2004 there have been 11 graduates with another 7 currently in training. All the graduates are now working as Lecturers in medicine in Uganda, several of them in Mbarara. There has been a positive impact on standards of clinical medicine, as well as to the motivation and morale of students and staff to see well trained Ugandan doctors working and teaching in the department.

Medsin-UK is a national network of over 3,000 students that aims to reduce local and global health inequalities through volunteering, advocacy and education. Medsin is working with partner organisations to develop institutional health partnerships between UK universities and their counterparts in low and middle-income countries. These links engage with academics, clinicians and students with the aim of supporting faculty development in research and teaching, whilst encouraging an approach to development that emphasises shared partnership and mutual benefit.

Help the Hospices works in collaboration with partners in the Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance to provide a global voice on hospice and palliative care issues as well as providing resources in support to develop capacity building at the local level.

A partnership between Help the Hospices and The Shepherd's Hospice in Sierra Leone is enabling people with HIV and TB across 8 districts to access treatment and care. The partnership dates back several years and in July 2008 together secured funding from DfID for a 5 year health development project. The partnership combines the management skills and palliative care expertise from each organization; meeting donor requirements and, affecting real and positive change to people's lives in Sierra Leone.

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health recognises the role of the Commonwealth Fellowship scheme to support the professional development of people working in the field of public health across the Commonwealth

Lifeline Network International has two decades of experience in developing international networks and linking community-based partners including health partners directly with one another.

World Child Cancer facilitates and develops twinning partnerships in which vital medical expertise is transferred from an experienced paediatric oncology centre in a resource rich country to doctors and nurses in a paediatric oncology unit in a developing country. This includes advice and guidance on strategic planning, development of treatment protocols and the creation of family support groups. On average, projects increase survival rates from less than 10% to around 50% over a five year period. World Child Cancer provides seed-funding over five years with the aim of developing sustainability over the long-term.

BUILD members have contributed to the Crisp Report (2007) 'Global Health Partnerships – the UK Contribution to Health in Developing Countries' since when the UK Department of Health has published "A framework for NHS Involvement in International Development" www.ihlc.org.uk which has resulted in an International Health Links Centre and a Health Links funding scheme to promote and support health care partnerships.

In 2004 DFID Health Resource Centre conducted an impact assessment of health links "Evaluation of links between north and south healthcare organisations". A summary conclusion was that individual ***Global Health Partnerships are seen overall as having a positive impact in terms both of achieving their own objectives and of being welcomed by countries studied.***

BUILD has also had the opportunity to meet with Dr Luis Sambo, Director of WHO in Africa to discuss the vital role that partnerships can play in addressing health needs in that continent.

For further information contact:
Dr Nick Maurice
Director, BUILD
The Upper Office,
The Dutch Barn,
Elm Tree Park, Manton,
Wiltshire SN8 1PS, United Kingdom.
Tel: +44(0)1672 861001
www.build-online.org.uk
nick@build-online.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1119523