

Global Monitoring Report: key points for health workforce

Health for All - when all people can access good quality, needed health services without financial hardship - is a building block for global health security, economic growth, equity and peace. Halfway through the Sustainable Development Goals, urgent ambitious actions are needed to restore and accelerate progress, reversing the blows dealt by COVID-19, situations of fragility, conflict and violence and other hazards like climate change.

The Global Monitoring Report quantifies deceleration, stagnation and lack of progress since the inception of the SDGs, along with recommendations - requirements - to set the world back on course to achieve universal health coverage with a focus on primary health care.

A PHC-oriented health system integrates delivery of quality essential health services (including Essential Public Health Functions, contributing to resilient health systems that can respond to unexpected health emergencies), community engagement and multi-sectoral policies and actions, and it has a constitutive commitment to human rights, gender equality, and equity. Health workforce is a priority to expand primary health care.

- The health and care workforce is the backbone of strong, resilient and people centred health systems. **Urgent investment in human capital, with whole of society engagement and strong intersectoral collaboration**, is not only the right strategy but also a wise approach to reinvigorate progress towards not only the health SDG but also principally employment, equity, economic and education Goals.
- Political commitment is essential, using that evidence-based, equity-focused Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health, which **dramatically reduced the global health workforce shortage from 18 million in 2013 to 15 million in 2020**, projected to be 10 million in 2030.
- Critically, **these data largely depict a pre-COVID-19 trend**, and **mask profound regional disparities**: progress is slower in the African and Eastern Mediterranean regions and Small Island Developing States. Africa's share of the gap is projected to rise from approximately 25% in 2013 to 52% by 2030; Small Island and Developing States are expected to experience a slower (-12%) decrease in shortage than other countries (-34%) between 2020 and 2030. Further, the negative health, economic and social impacts of **COVID-19 render even realized gains fragile**.
- Growing international **migration**, recently accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, **may lead to increasing vulnerabilities within countries already suffering from low health workforce densities**. In 2022, approximately 15% of health and care workers globally were working outside their country of birth or first professional qualification.
- Women comprise 67% of the global health and care workforce and in most countries the health and care sector is characterized by strong gender segregation: **women are underrepresented in the highest-paid occupations and overrepresented in low- or non-remunerated jobs**. Gender gaps are higher than in many other sectors and include a **24% gender pay gap**.
- Progress towards UHC and the SDGs can be accelerated by **scaling up pre-service education** for health and care workers in line with improved quality standards; **planning for a rational, cost-effective skills mix** that is *responsive to the needs of the population*; and using knowledge about the health workforce to **drive investment that improves its absorption in the health labour market**.