Careers in Global Health

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There are huge global health problems...

But they offer exciting opportunities to find our **purpose**
- Purpose

You Love It

You Are Great At It

You Are Paid For It

Mission

Vocation

The World Needs It

Passion

Profession
Incredible variety of career pathways!
My long and winding career path...
how my brain tells me they got there

someone I look up to

how they actually got there

how I (and you!) can get there too
STEP-UP: Ingredients for success in global health

• **Strategy and soft skills**: getting the big picture, understanding the politics & diplomacy; communication and interpersonal skills (humility, cultural awareness, respect for partners and diversity, ability to listen, learn & adapt, ‘do no harm’)

• **Excellence**: You have to excel in your chosen field & and develop expertise (which includes learning from partners & communities)

• **Team work**: Large scale problems require interdisciplinary teams; impact can never be achieved by individuals

• **Perseverance**: it is not easy to improve health & earn the trust of partners, and you need to be patient and be in it for the *long haul*

• **Unrelenting Optimism**: you need to believe that you can make a difference and learnt to overcome failures

• **Passion**: You need to be really excited about the field and have a *vision* for making a positive contribution
FAQs

• Do I need to become a doctor to do global health?
• Do I need a degree in a health field to do global health?
• Do I need a degree in global health?
• Do I need to be an academic to do global health?
• Do I need a job at WHO to do global health?
• Do I have to move to a low-income country to do global health?
• Who are the global health employers and what are they looking for?
• What skills and competencies are valued in global health?
Employers & what they look for

Career opportunities in global health: A snapshot of the current employment landscape

Quentin Eichbaum, Adam Hoverman, William Cherniak, Jessica Evert, Elahe Nezami, Thomas Hall

Figure 1. Depiction of survey results of career opportunities in global health. A) Breakdown of types of global health employers. B) The primary disciplines sought by employers. C) Highest academic achievement required or desired by employers. D) A sub-categorization of specific function desired in a program-related job.
What skills & competencies are valued?
The Global Local Divide: Impact On Career Paths And Employment Opportunities

Survey of 49 Global Health Program Directors
March 2015

Dr. Sharon Rudy
Director, Global Health Fellows Program II


https://ghcompetencies.forumbee.com/t/h4xqd9/global-health-competencies
Most Important Non-Clinical Skills

- Project Management
- Communication with client, counterpart, community
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Strategy & Project Design

https://ghcompetencies.forumbee.com/t/h4xqd9/global-health-competencies
Common In-Service Training by Employers

- Project Design, Management, M&E
- Communication, Collaboration & Team Work
- Leadership & Supervision
- Writing
- Research & Analysis

https://ghcompetencies.forumbee.com/t/h4xqd9/global-health-competencies
Advice to Graduate Students

Get Experience
- Overseas project implementation
- Field work
- Diverse learning opportunities

Strengthen Skills
- M & E
- Proposals
- Project Management

https://ghcompetencies.forumbee.com/t/h4xqd9/global-health-competencies
Perceived Weaknesses

Perceived Weaknesses of Domestic Health Professionals Moving to Global Health

Understanding context and realities of global health
Flexibility, adaptability, creativity
Cultural sensitivity
Cross-cultural communication
Knowledge of key players, systems, processes

https://ghcompetencies.forumbee.com/t/h4xqd9/global-health-competencies
Global Health Employers Workshop @McGill (Sept 21)

Attendees from:
• IDRC
• Aga Khan Foundation
• Results Canada
• Thrive Hire
• GCC
• Partners in Health
• Public Health Agency of Canada
• Office of the International Affairs for the Health Portfolio
• CARE Canada
• Canadian Red Cross
• HealthBridge Foundation
Competencies/skills valued by employers

- Project management/conduct
- Research in low resource settings
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Understanding of health systems
- Communication & written skills
- “Soft” skills

Topics identified as important:
- Disease burden/Morbidity & Mortality
- Conflict, emergency response, forced migration
- Climate change/Environmental Health
- Nutrition
- Technologies. Diagnostics
- Indigenous health
- Human rights, justice, equity
Field experience really matters!

“Get overseas experience. Make sure you are cut out for living overseas in difficult conditions with few resources. Programme directors lament the extra costs associated with people abandoning posts because they can't handle the conditions.” (Gewin, Nature 2007)
But, do no harm!
Avoid short-term, mission-mode, parachute field work

Beyond Medical “Missions” to Impact-Driven Short-Term Experiences in Global Health (STEGHs): Ethical Principles to Optimize Community Benefit and Learner Experience

Melissa K. Melby, PhD, MPhil, MA, Lawrence C. Loh, MD, MPH, Jessica Evert, MD, Christopher Prater, MD, Henry Lin, MD, and Omar A. Khan, MD, MHS


Avoid global health malpractice!

Do NOT:
• 1. Perpetuate colonial practices
• 2. Undermine local talent & expertise
• 3. Practice medicine (without a license)
• 4. Engage in voluntourism
• 5. Try to ‘fix’ issues that you don’t understand
• 6. Go overseas without pre-departure training
• 7. Do research without supervision (& ethics review)
• 8. Conduct parachute research
• 9. Put yourself in dangerous situations
• 10. Make promises you cannot keep

If you are looking for inspiration...