

## **Assessing In-Country Public Health Training Needs: Workforce Development to Meet Sustainable Development Goals**

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**Abstract :** Health systems globally are facing increasingly complex challenges. Emerging health threats, changing population demographics and increasing health inequalities, globalisation, economic constraints on government spending are some of the most critical ones. These challenges demand not only innovative funding and cross-sectoral approaches, but also require a multidisciplinary public health workforce equipped with skills and expertise to meet the future challenges of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We aim to outline an approach to assessing the feasibility of establishing a competency-based public health training at a country level. Although the SDGs provide an enabling impetus for change and promote positive developments, public health training and education still lag behind. Large gaps are apparent in both the numbers of trained professionals and the options for high quality training. Public health training in most Low-Middle Income Countries is still largely characterized by a traditional and limited public health focus. There is a pressing need to review and develop core and emerging competences for a well-equipped workforce fit for the future. This includes the important role of national Health and Human Resource Ministries in determining these competences. Public health has long been recognised as a multidisciplinary field, with need for professionals from a wider range of disciplines such as management, health promotion, health economics, law. Leadership and communication skills are also critical to achieve the successes in meeting public health outcomes. Such skills and competences need to be translated into competency-based training and education, to prepare current public health professionals with the skills required in today's competitive job market. Integration of academic and service based public-health training, flexible accredited programmes to support existing mid-career professionals, continuous professional development need to be explored. In the current global climate of austerity and increasing demands on health systems, the need for stepping up public health training and education is more important than ever. By using a case study, we demonstrate the process of assessing the in-county capacity to establish a competency based public health training programme that will help to develop a stronger, more versatile and much needed public health workforce to meet the SDGs.

**Keywords :** public health training, competency-based, assessment, SDGs

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