

Preface

In this textbook we focus on global health diplomacy as a means whereby issues affecting health that cannot be resolved by one country or agency working alone are addressed together. It demands the creative engagement of many different bodies including governments, international agencies, civil society and the private sector. It needs to be concerned with the biological, economic, environmental and social determinants of health that affect us all as global citizens, whether in high- or low-income countries. Global health diplomacy that addresses transborder issues has been practiced for some 160 years, but as globalisation has gathered pace in the last decades, the practice of diplomacy in this sphere has gained new relevance. There is now increasing interest in health as a component of the foreign policies of nations and it has become a key topic at UN and meetings of other organizations.

Global health diplomacy has also become a more complex undertaking as many different agencies are now realising their contribution to and responsibility for health. This complexity demands new skills from diplomats and health officials. This textbook is a response to these new needs; it attempts to share the knowledge and experience of practicing officials and academics working in this evolving field to develop the art and science of global health diplomacy.

Context

This textbook is one component among others developed by the Global Health Programme at the Graduate Institute of International Health and Development Studies, Geneva devoted to capacity building in this domain. It complements the other components: a training manual, online course and training of trainer's workshops and serves as a guidebook for in-depth learning on key issues in this field. In addition the Global Health Programme has been publishing a range of case studies on the practice of health diplomacy in different venues and settings. The Global Health Programme has been pioneering executive education in global health diplomacy since its first international course in Geneva in 2007. Since then it has held the

Geneva flagship course on an annual basis and has conducted training in partnership with a range of countries and institutions in the Brazil, Canada, China, Indonesia, Kenya, and USA as well as in conjunction with WHO HQ and regional offices. The Global Health Programme is also part of the global health diplomacy network (GHD.net), which collaborates and disseminates knowledge in this new field.

Global health diplomacy brings together the disciplines of public health, international affairs, management, law and economics and focuses on negotiations that shape and manage the global policy environment for health in health and non-health venues. It relates in particular to health issues that cross national boundaries, are global in nature and require global agreements to address them.

The aim of this textbook is to support capacity building in this new field. It is directed in particular at representatives of ministries of health, foreign affairs, staff of international organisations and non-state actors who engage in trans-border health negotiations. It aims to increase their understanding of the dynamics of global health diplomacy and improve their negotiation skills. It provides the broad group of “new health diplomats” with insight into the institutions and instruments, the mechanisms of policy coherence and the negotiation processes. It attempts to balance conceptual and practical approaches and build a bridge between public health experts and diplomats as well as the many other actors in global health diplomacy. It is also directed at schools of public health and international relations which are beginning to give more attention to this developing area.

Geneva, Switzerland
London, UK
Geneva, Switzerland
Geneva, Switzerland

Ilona Kickbusch
Graham Lister
Michaela Told
Nick Drager



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