Skilled human resources are the backbone of any performing health system. But many countries in sub-Saharan Africa face a human resource crisis due to health workforce shortages, brain drain and lack of adequate training.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Global Health Workforce Alliance [2] reports that 1.5 million healthcare professionals are needed in Africa. The continent as a whole has only 2% of the global supply of physicians though it weathers 24% of the world’s disease burden, according to research published in the journal BMJ [3]. There is also a massive need for nurses, birthing attendants and community healthcare workers.

To improve the quality of healthcare services, the shortage of healthcare workers must be addressed. Quality training and education is needed to fill the gap and increase the output of qualified doctors, nurses, midwives and other healthcare workers.

The Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development has worked with the WHO and the
Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute to develop eLearning tools – ICATT and IMPACtt – to scale up professional training in maternal, newborn and child health globally. The foundation also supports the Tanzanian Training Centre for International Health (TTCIH [4]), which trains Assistant Medical Officers (AMO) and other health workers; Novartis sponsors African healthcare scientists in a master’s degree program in clinical epidemiology at the University of Stellenbosch in Cape Town, South Africa.

“There’s a lot of opportunity to help people in Africa live longer, healthier lives,” said Joseph Jimenez, chief executive officer of Novartis. “We’re making a long-term commitment to be part of the solution.”

Learn more about the Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development. [5]


Links