

# EQUIPPING AND ACTIVATING GLOBAL HEALTH CHANGE AGENTS: A COMPETENCY-BASED FRAMEWORK

## INTRODUCTION

Due to persistent inequities, changing demographics, and increasingly complex health systems, global health challenges are more daunting than ever before. Training of the health workforce has not adapted to this reality. “In almost all countries, the education of health professionals has failed to overcome dysfunctional and inequitable health systems.<sup>1</sup>” There is a clear need for training that equips and activates global health change agents, which is the mission of Arnhold Institute for Global Health Training & Workforce.



*“In almost all countries, education of health professionals has failed to overcome dysfunctional and inequitable health systems”*

### global health change agent

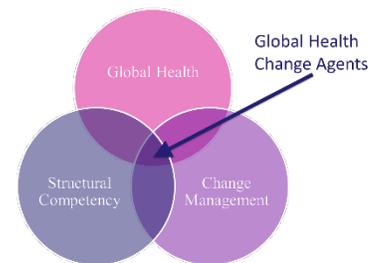
*noun*

an individual with the capacity to undertake purposeful action for change in systems of health throughout the world

**Global Health Change Agents are individuals with the capacity to undertake purposeful action for change in systems of health throughout the world.** A Global Health Change Agent can be anyone with the passion, commitment, and capacity to spark transformation.

## GLOBAL HEALTH CHANGE AGENT COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

To equip and activate global health change agents, a new type of training is needed that takes a competency-based approach. This approach aims to equip individuals with the competencies (skills, knowledge and attitudes) necessary for their role. **Competencies are the core, instinctive approaches that inform an individual’s engagement with patients and health systems.** The Arnhold Institute for Global Health Training & Workforce Team has developed the **Global Health Change Agent Competency Framework**, drawing from the fields of global health, change management, and structural competency. The competency framework consists of 26 competencies that are foundational to global health change across a variety of contexts, cultures, systems, and roles.



<sup>1</sup> Frenk, J, et al. "Health professionals for a new century: transforming education to strengthen health systems in an interdependent world." *The Lancet* 376.9756 (2010): 1923-1958.

# GLOBAL HEALTH CHANGE AGENT COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

COMPETENCY	COMPETENCY STATEMENT: <i>The individual...</i>	
SELF	Courage	... speaks up and takes actions in a way that may contradict with the status quo.
	Ethics and Professionalism	... remains grounded in a moral framework that upholds respect for him/herself and others.
	Flexibility	... remains open to others' ideas about new and better ways of operating, even if they require adjusted time frames.
	Leadership	... maintains a high level of self-awareness and emotional intelligence to lead adaptively and authentically.
	Structural Awareness	... is aware of the ways that "economic, physical, and socio-political forces impact [health]." <sup>2</sup>
	Structural Humility	... demonstrates critical recognition of the limitations of medical and health expertise, and sees structural competency as the beginning of a deeper learning process. <sup>3</sup>
	Systems Thinking	... understands systems as "nonstatic, complex, and adaptive," and has ability to see "how related parts of a system work together." <sup>4</sup>
INTERPERSONAL	Communication	... engages in dialogue around ideas, progress, and data with a commitment to transparency and mutual learning.
	Conflict Resolution	... actively prevents, identifies, manages, and resolves conflict.
	Decision-making and Problem-solving	... makes decisions in a timely, strategic manner in order to effectively solve problems and advance progress.
	Diplomacy	... embraces difference in other people and manages cross-cultural relationships with sensitivity, curiosity, and thoughtfulness.
	Influence	... effectively persuades others to gain support.
	Participatory Action	... actively engages stakeholders (e.g. patients, caretakers, community members) to participate in the design, implementation, evaluation, and scaling of the initiative.
	Political Skill	... identifies, understands, and manages political dynamics to build power around the initiative.
	Relationship Building	... sees genuine, reciprocal relationships as the foundation of a successful initiative and makes effort to cultivate them.
SYSTEMIC	Strategic Planning	... possesses strategic focus and the ability to develop plans and processes that organize people to make progress toward the goals.
	Advocacy	... understands fundamental advocacy tactics and employs them to mobilize allies.
	Asset-based Approach	... engages with systems and communities from a perspective of the assets they possess, rather than their deficits.
	Change Models	... possesses knowledge of various change models and ability to discern which are relevant to different aspects of the initiative.
	Operationalizing Equity	... understands how to build systems that use targeted strategies to achieve health for all, recognizing that everyone's needs are unique.
	Partnership Building	... understands how to leverage interpersonal relationships to build mutually-beneficial multi-sectoral partnerships between institutions.
	Policy Analysis	... understands which policies ground the structures that impact health and has the skill to critically analyze them.
	Stakeholder Analysis	... systematically gathers and analyzes information to determine how to take various interests into account.
	Structural Determinants of Health	... possesses the capacity to recognize and understand structural determinants of health and apply that knowledge.
	Structural Interventions	... develops interventions that are responsive to the "financial, legislative, and cultural decisions" that shape health and illness. <sup>5</sup>
Systems Design	... designs or redesigns systems in an iterative, responsive, equitable manner.	

<sup>2</sup> Metz, JM and H Hansen. "Structural competency: Theorizing a new medical engagement with stigma and inequality." *Social Science & Medicine* 103 (2014) 126-133.

<sup>3</sup> Metz, JM and H Hansen. "Structural competency: Theorizing a new medical engagement with stigma and inequality." *Social Science & Medicine* 103 (2014) 126-133.

<sup>4</sup> Gonzalo, J, et al. "Aligning Education with Health Care Transformation: Identifying a Shared Mental Model of 'New' Faculty Competencies for Academic Faculty." *Academic Medicine* 92 (2018) 256-264.

<sup>5</sup> Metz, JM and H Hansen. "Structural competency: Theorizing a new medical engagement with stigma and inequality." *Social Science & Medicine* 103 (2014) 126-133