

## Three Harvard schools and Africa CDC launch inaugural global nursing leadership program at virtual workshop

*Workshop headlined by World Trade Organization Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala formally kicks off program led by Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, which aims to strengthen global nursing and midwifery workforce*

For immediate release: May 5, 2021

**BOSTON** – Recognizing the urgent need to elevate nursing and midwifery leadership around the world, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Harvard Kennedy School, and Harvard Graduate School of Education, together with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), have launched the [Harvard Global Nursing Leadership Program](#) to give ministry-level nurses and midwives a foundational understanding and field experience in global public health and population health management.

The program formally kicked off on April 29, 2021, during World Immunization Week, with a two-hour virtual workshop featuring a keynote address from Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

“Throughout history, nurses have played a crucial role in advocating for and in delivering vaccines,” said Okonjo-Iweala in her remarks. “The bottom line is that we need to advocate for the expansion of the scope of practice for nurses and midwives to meet the needs of our world’s populations now and after the pandemic.”

More than 80 nursing and midwifery leaders and other key partners from 20 countries attended the workshop, which focused on vaccine equity and the role of nurses in vaccination programs as well as the new program’s curriculum design.

“When the World Health Organization declared 2020 the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, Harvard Chan School made the decision to expand and customize its educational and leadership programs for nurses and midwives,” says Michelle A. Williams, dean of the faculty at Harvard Chan School. “The devastating COVID-19 pandemic has only underscored the urgency of advancing nurse leadership at the highest levels. As the first public health-focused program of its kind, the Harvard Global Nursing Leadership Program will expand nurses’ roles in shaping not only health care, but also global public health.”

The new certificate program will enroll its first cohort in Africa in summer 2022, then expand to include nurses and midwives from Asia, Latin American, the Caribbean, and North America in subsequent years. The certificate program core courses will eventually become part of a new MPH program to be offered at a later date.

“In the wake of a critical and escalating nursing shortage, and in the grips of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the time is right for a renewed commitment to supporting, educating, and strengthening the nursing and midwifery workforce worldwide,” says John N. Nkengasong, director of Africa CDC. “We are pleased to partner with Harvard Chan School to create a robust, inspirational, wide-ranging educational program that prepares and positions the world’s health workforce to meet global challenges and ensure the provision of quality health care.”

**The Harvard Global Nursing Leadership Program** will offer a comprehensive curriculum that prepares and positions chief nursing and midwifery officers, regulators, and national nursing associations to improve global public health by advancing the [Global Health Security Agenda](#), [universal health coverage](#), and the UN’s [Sustainable Development Goals](#). The goal is to foster rapport and networks among nurse and ministry-level health leaders in national positions across the world, paving the way for global solutions to longstanding and acutely emerging health challenges. Nursing leaders will determine (in collaboration with their country’s key stakeholders and ministers of health, education and finance) strategies for their respective nations, and build the coalitions necessary to execute and evaluate the impacts of public health plans as well as protocols for emergency response. Knowledge and skills gained will help enrollees excel in six key areas: health systems strengthening, emergency preparedness and population health management, human-centered design for health and wellness, health financing, and strategic communications.

The program is working with global partner organizations to identify and recruit executive-level nurses and midwives with the capacity to shape strong coalitions and lead global public health strategy. These partners include the African Union, the World Bank, the Harvard Kennedy School, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, WHO, the International Council of Nurses, the Burdett Trust for Nursing, the University of Edinburgh, the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis, the Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Association, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, and Nursing Now.

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**About Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health**

[Harvard Chan School](#) brings together dedicated experts from many disciplines to educate new generations of global health leaders and produce powerful ideas that improve the lives and health of people everywhere. As a community of leading scientists, educators, and students, we work together to take innovative ideas from the laboratory to people’s lives—not only making scientific breakthroughs, but also working to change individual behaviors, public policies, and health care practices. Each year, more than 400 faculty members at Harvard Chan School teach 1,000-plus full-time students from around the world and train thousands more through online and executive education courses. Founded in 1913 as the Harvard-MIT School of Health Officers, the School is recognized as America’s oldest professional training program in public health.

**About Africa CDC**

[Africa CDC](#) is a specialized technical institution of the African Union that strengthens the capacity and capability of Africa’s public health institutions as well as partnerships to detect and respond quickly and effectively to disease threats and outbreaks, based on data-driven interventions and programs.