

Imagining Global Health with Justice

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The scope and complexity of global health can be overwhelming, making it difficult to form an inspiring and unified vision for the future. Mired in this complexity, the international community defines success disease by disease—without a clear picture of what fundamental reform would actually look like. If the aspiration of global health with justice is the right goal, then answering three simple questions may pierce the haze.

First, what would global health look like? That is, given optimal priority-setting, funding, and implementation, to what level of health should we aspire, and with what provision of health-related services?

Second, what would global health with *justice* look like? Global health seeks to improve all the major indicators of health, such as infant and maternal mortality and longevity. Global health with justice, however, requires that we look beyond improved health outcomes for the population as a whole. Although overall population health is vitally important, justice requires a significant reduction in health disparities between the well-off and the poor. Societies that achieve high levels of health and longevity for most, while the poor and marginalized die young, do not comport with social justice.

Third, what would it take to achieve global health with justice? That is, once we clearly state the goal, and meaning, of global health with justice, what concrete steps are required to reach this ambitious objective? This raises fundamental challenges, intellectually and operationally, as the response cannot be limited to ever-greater resources, but must also involve improved governance—at the country and international level and across multiple sectors.

Posing these three elementary questions, of course, oversimplifies a field that is fraught with tensions and trade offs. But I want to imagine a more ideal future for world health, with bold proposals to get there. After thinking about these three basic questions, I turn to an idea for innovative global governance for health—a Framework Convention on Global Health.