

RESILIENT AND RESPONSIVE HEALTH SYSTEMS CAN PROTECT THE POOR AND PROMOTE EQUITY SAY EXPERTS

Marginalised communities in low, middle, and high-income countries, face daily challenges that impede their health and lives, argued policymakers, practitioners and researchers at the [Fourth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research](#) this week. Experts at the Symposium called for global leaders to learn lessons both from poor and rich countries to address the inequities that exist in all communities.

[Christina Zarowsky, University of Montreal, Canada](#) and co-chair of the Programme Working Group for the Symposium. ‘The Symposium highlighted the struggles of indigenous and other marginalized peoples in high income countries, as well as in low- and middle- income countries’.

Highlighting the discussions at the Symposium, Christina said, ‘Throughout the week we have heard stories from Canada to Guatemala that showed being from a high-income country does not exclude people from marginalisation, and that health and social justice are inextricably linked. We cannot seek to address one without the other.’

‘The struggles and concerns of indigenous and marginalised people in high income countries reinforces that we must challenge ourselves and others to work together and learn across all countries.’ Christina explained.

‘As a global community, we must recognise that if we are to build resilient and responsive health systems, we have design them around the needs of people whose health they are meant to improve and protect, said [Kabir Sheikh, Chair of Health Systems Global](#).

‘Resilient and responsive health systems are anchored in people living and working within communities. Health systems need to be resilient so that the most vulnerable do not have to carry the weight of shocks and uncertainty. For health systems to be resilient they need to have an explicit focus on equity and social justice and support the empowerment of the most vulnerable’.

ENDS.

For further information on the Symposium or to request an interview with the named spokespeople, please contact Vivienne Benson on v.benson@ids.ac.uk; +44 778 901-3453; or Marg Buchanan on buchanan.marg@gmail.com; +1 514 627-3932

Notes to Editors

- [Health Systems Global](#) organizes a symposium every two years to bring together its members with the broad range of players involved in health systems and policy research. The focus of the Fourth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2016) in Vancouver between 14-18 November was on building resilient and responsive health systems. It hosted over 2,062 leading global health thinkers and practitioners on health systems.
- A health system is the people, institutions and resources, arranged together in accordance with established policies, to improve the health of a population.
- A resilient health system is one that is able to prepare and respond to health-related crises by maintaining core functions and reorganising if required.
- A responsive health system meets a population's needs and expectations of how it should be treated, including respecting people's dignity, autonomy and confidentiality; and anticipates and corresponds with people's changing needs, which are shaped by social, economic, ecological and epidemiological changes.
- The Symposium is sponsored by Health Systems Global, World Health Organization, Pan American Health Organization, Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, Canadian Society for International Health, International Development Research Centre and The Canadian Institutes of Health Research.
- The Fifth Global Symposium for Health Systems Research will be hosted in 2018 in Liverpool.