

Editorial

BEST PRACTICE FOR GLOBAL IMPACT; FOSTERING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE THROUGH MEANINGFUL NETWORKING

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Communities of practice (CoP) are mainstay in identity formation of any profession¹. Networking events and conferences are by far the best way to gather together people of similar interests from diverse backgrounds to foster a kinship that not only leads to advancement of the profession but also of the participating individuals. Organizations and societies hosting international conferences and meetings through quality interactions generally succeed in building long term connections projecting a soft image and creating goodwill. Health professions education (HPE) also known as medical education has gained momentum in Pakistan in the last 20 years with start of masters, and doctorate programs in major universities around the country. The growth of the specialty has resulted in an increase in local scholarship and also in rethinking the curriculum and assessment of the health professions, especially the field of medicine. International conferences like Association of Medical Education of Europe (AMEE)² have generated momentum of medical education fraternity coming together from around the globe and this has resulted in conferences and seminars being conducted by colleges and universities at local level as well to create a dialogue and develop a culture of quality

educational reform in Pakistan. One of the conferences that has stood out in the last decade is the International conference on Health Professions Education (ICHPE)³ which started as a small HEC funded event in 2014 attended by the delegates from one private university and expanded in 2023 to one of the largest medical education conferences held at national level with collaboration of 25 institutions including the public and private sector, boasting the biggest sectoral collaboration in the field of health professions education in Pakistan. Keeping up with tradition, the famous national and international speakers at ICHPE in year 2023 stressed the adaptation of medical education to the local context and incorporating cultural, social, and ethical dimensions in HPE was emphasized throughout the sessions. The theme resonated with the current pulse of medical education, highlighting the need for a holistic approach to healthcare training. The conference brought together renowned 19 national and 17 international speakers who shared their insights and experiences, enriching the sessions through sharing of best practices in HPE around the world. The presentation of quality educational research by the medical education fraternity, the workshops and micro-credentialing courses like leadership and governance practices brought the novices and the experts in the field closer together thus providing platform for movement of peripheral observers to central participants within the

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health professions education community. This remarkable growth of ICHPE can be attributed to focus of the event on connecting international experts in medical education to the national stakeholders including not only the students of health professions education but also the heads of institutions, accrediting bodies and the governmental organizations aiming to appraise the guests with the best practices in the country and building a rapport to enhance the image of our graduates in the eyes of the important world bodies. This thoughtful interaction over the years has resulted not only in communicating the Pakistani context to the international education arena but has also contributed towards the world accepting the implementation of standards of medical education that could be contextualized to needs of local community. The national leaders in medical education and stakeholders in government and accrediting bodies like Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) have also gotten a chance to be able to connect to the presidents of international organizations like world federation of medical education (WFME) specifically in 2022 and 2023 and have subsequently ensured that the country is well prepared for taking appropriate measures to maintain eligibility of our medical graduates to be part of the healthcare workforce around the world. Communities of practice are groups of individuals who have common concerns, problems, and passions with an intent to enhance their expertise and knowledge by interacting on a regular basis.⁴ This can be successfully achieved through openness and shared ownership of any networking event. Conferences ensure diversity that then translates into quality outcomes. Focus on developing guidelines and policies that are co-created by local and international experts and are openly shared with all from faculty to students to organizational leads has built trust in ICHPE as a platform for knowledge gaining and sharing. The growth of any community and its regular

interaction leads to sustainable growth in higher education. The conferences that ensure advancing country wide agendas, encourage research, ensure community outreach, and foster a culture of knowledge dissemination are instrumental in becoming the important tools to ensure achievement of sustainable development goals⁵. ICHPE in its upcoming years aims to maintain the standards and expand its horizons from professional to interprofessional education that can bring together experts not only within health professions but also across the cutting-edge worlds of technology and artificial intelligence to be able to navigate the latest industrial revolution for better quality of healthcare education leading to a personalized delivery of quality healthcare to the masses. In the words of Brian Tracy, Continuous learning is the minimum requirement of success in any field.

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