



Correction: June 30, 2023

A previous version of this newsletter described lesson number four as "Avoid uncertainty." It has been corrected to read "Avoid certainty."



Alamy

The Exemplar

June 2023

Hi Friend,


In June 2020, we launched Exemplars in Global Health as a resource for global health decision makers. Our goal was clear: to identify and analyze countries making extraordinary progress in health and share key takeaways that could be scaled elsewhere.

It's fitting, then, that as we celebrate our third anniversary, we invite someone whose career has been marked by the extraordinary, to share the essential lessons from one of global health's most outstanding achievements.

I met Dr. Bill Foege for the first time in 2005. We were in Hanover, New Hampshire, and he was the Class Day Keynote speaker at my Dartmouth Medical School Graduation Ceremony. It was after hearing his remarks that I decided to pursue a career in public health. As he was for me then, Dr. Foege continues to be a source of inspiration for all of us who work in public health. And in his latest project – [Becoming Better Ancestors](#) – he shares the nine essential lessons learned during the campaign to eradicate smallpox, one of the most devastating diseases of our time, and the only one to ever be wiped off the face of the earth.

I am honored to turn over this newsletter to the incomparable Dr. Bill Foege, himself an exemplar among exemplars.

Best,
Niranjan Bose

 **Gates Ventures**
Niranjan Bose, PhD
Managing Director, Health & Life Sciences

When smallpox was declared dead in 1980, it was celebrated as one of the greatest successes in global public health: we knew communicable disease anywhere was a threat to humanity everywhere. It was something all of us saw again in 2020, when COVID ravaged our world.

Today, in the aftermath of the pandemic, changemakers from the global health community have joined together to document important lessons from the campaign to eradicate smallpox, exploring how they may serve humanity, next time we are faced with an existential threat.

Though there are many more than nine lessons from our time working on smallpox, the below are essential. Not only do they serve as lessons, but they surface important questions we must ask ourselves, if we are to ensure we are intentional, responsible, and reliable, when danger arises.

1. **This is a cause-and-effect world.** Are our proposed solutions scientifically sound?
2. **Know, share, and act on the truth.** Are we working in an evidence-based manner, with transparency and honesty at the forefront?
3. **Coalitions are essential.** Have we selected, organized, and mobilized the partners we need?
4. **Avoid certainty.** Are we open to taking risks, seeking new knowledge, and changing?
5. **Build in evaluation and improvement.** Are we applying what we learn to improve on solutions?
6. **Respect the culture. Culture matters.** Are we aiming to understand, learn from, and partner closely with intended beneficiaries?
7. **Seek strong leadership and management.** Do we integrate the best science with the most effective management?
8. **Mobilize political will.** Have we identified key decision makers, and mobilized political support?
9. **Move towards global health equity.** Have we measured and reduced inequities?

There's a sentence I've been saying a lot, as of late: "becoming better ancestors may be the final act of love." In the end, this may be the best way to honor our shared humanity.

Dr. William H. Foege

In a recent Exemplars interview, Dr. Bill Foege discusses his surprising path to global health, strategies to address vaccine hesitancy, and the importance of unscrambling eggs.

[LEARN MORE](#)

EXEMPLARS STORIES

Basing health decisions on credible data

A recent article originally published in SciDev.Net covered the Exemplars in Global Health program and emphasized the importance of utilizing reliable data to guide global health policies and programs. [Read the article in English here.](#) [Lire l'article en Français ici.](#)

How to leverage the superpowers of diagnostics

Exemplars News spoke with Dr. Emma Hannay of FIND about how the global health community can leverage momentum from COVID-19 to broaden access to diagnostics and treatment.

PEPFAR: 20 years of saving lives and investing in strengthening health systems

One of the most successful global health initiatives, the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has saved more than 25 million lives.

EVENTS

IHEA World Congress on Health Economics (@healthconomics)

July 8 – 12, 2023

A global forum for health economists to engage with the latest methodologies. Exemplars research partners will be in attendance to present new primary health care findings.

Women Deliver 2023 Conference (#WD2023)

July 17 – 20, 2023

Experts will convene at Women Deliver 2023 to discuss evidenced-based solutions that champion gender equality. Exemplars partners and team members will participate in the event to discuss topics that are critical to women's health including adolescent sexual reproductive health and rights.

Nutrition 2023 (#Nutrition2023)

July 22 – 25, 2023

Nutrition 2023 will be an opportunity to engage with researchers, thought leaders, and academics specializing in nutrition from around the world.

Follow us on LinkedIn for additional updates, resources, and research.

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ABOUT

Become an Exemplar

Join a passionate and dedicated community of global health leaders working on the biggest challenges of our times. Explore critical learning from countries around the world as you tackle similar problems at home. Informed by your knowledge and voice, our robust and growing set of resources are designed to ensure the positive and most equitable global health outcomes.

