Can partnerships be truly mutually beneficial? What are the benefits to the NHS?

Brenda Longstaff
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Holiday?
Reality!
NHS perception of international health links

Barriers to be overcome

+ The main challenge is to overcome the lack of understanding about international links at operational level within the NHS
+ There is also a limited public understanding of the impact and value of international links to the NHS especially in relation to cost.
+ NHS employers need evidence of the skills and knowledge gained through international work and how that translates to professional development to allow them to support our work.
Benefits to the NHS: Positive messages

+ The NHS is a global brand that is respected across the world.
+ Healthcare professionals engaged in international links act as overseas health ‘ambassadors’ for the NHS.
+ When international work is strategically planned it can lead to long term sustainable growth for the link partner and have real value.
+ Investment in health links not only provides benefits for the international partner but also unique professional and personal development opportunities for UK health professionals.
Research

+ Published in the online Health Service Journal (May 2012)
+ Knowledge and skills gained from international links were matched to many of the core dimensions of the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework and the NHS Leadership Framework
+ The research found that participants had developed skills which would make them more effective within the NHS.

Research title: Innovative workforce development: the case for international health links
Longstaff B. (2012), “How International Health Links can help the NHS workforce develop
Health Service Journal online (24th May, 2012)
Potential problems

For the organisation:
+ Providing commitment to an international link can be challenging when cost cutting targets have to be met.
+ Balancing operational demands with professional development opportunities can deny opportunities to get involved.
+ Managing public expectations of UK healthcare delivery and justifying involvement in international health links.

For the individual:
+ The experience of international work can be demanding and lead to culture shock.
+ Expectations can be high and objectives may not be met leading to disappointment.
+ Not everyone can thrive in such a challenging environment.
+ It can be difficult to adapt practice within a less well resourced environment.
Benefits to the NHS

Relationships

+ Better working relationships with international colleagues who are working within the NHS.
+ Greater ability to relate to patients from different cultures, including refugees who may come from an area you have worked in.
+ Appreciation for colleagues who work in other disciplines, appreciating their area of expertise and fostering cross-discipline partnership working.
+ Experience of managing and nurturing professional relationships at all levels.
Benefits to the NHS

+ Change management: learning from a back-to-basics approach.
+ Resource management: greater awareness of the cost of healthcare delivery.
+ Innovative ways of working: thinking outside the box.
+ Global health knowledge: preparing for the future.
+ Talent management: providing an opportunity for top professionals to take up the challenge of international links work.
Recruitment and retention: case study
Liam Horgan, Consultant Surgeon, Director of Northern Skills Institute, Hexham General Hospital

International work provides new challenges and an added dimension to a successful teaching and training institute.

+ Training of international professionals
+ Conference for UK medical students showcases international work
+ International placement opportunities
+ Experience of setting up new services overseas
Leadership: case study
Judith Cobb, Lead Sonographer

Opportunity for professional development:
+ Development of short course in ultrasound for Tanzania
+ Formulation of long term plans to expand an ultrasound service to serve the wider community
+ Overcoming obstacles to provide equipment and training in remote locations
+ Raising the profile of the sonography service at home and abroad
+ Promotion to Lead sonographer / Head of Service for Northumbria
Teamwork: case study
Sue Colley, Upper GI Nurse Specialist

Involvement in the development of a surgical tele-mentoring link led to a unique opportunity to:

+ Work outside normal operational parameters
+ Playing a role within a wider team of senior managers, surgeons, theatre nurses, engineers and IT specialists.
+ Participate in a nursing forum via the internet
+ Develop locally appropriate training modules for less developed countries
External collaboration: case study
Professor Ieuan Ellis, Leeds Metropolitan

Collaboration between the NHS and universities:
  + Joint working to support the development of a BSC physiotherapy course.
  + Opportunities for Tanzanian physiotherapists to obtain MSc in the UK to become trainers.
  + NHS trust provides qualified lecturer-practitioners to teach undergraduate modules.
  + UK physiotherapy graduates are offered a preceptorship contract in Tanzania to gain work experience.
Career progression: case study
Alastair Hayes, ST3 General Surgery

Evidence presented at national Surgery ST3 selection interview (portfolio):
+ Unique undergraduate teaching experience
+ National-level course faculty experience
+ Team building / leadership (organised other trainees)

Experience now relevant to ST3+ training
+ Curriculum development – undergraduate module / Masters program
+ Experience to share with other trainees
+ Global health knowledge
Lessons learnt:

+ Without an established power base there is a need to rely on persuasion and negotiation.
+ Increased speed of decision making – more reactive to situations.
+ Awareness of upskilling opportunities – a chance to work within new roles.
+ Scarce resources encourage a can do attitude to overcome barriers and work within financial limitations.
Life changing experience: case study
Helen Boon OBE, Community Nurse

A renewed sense of dedication to the NHS:
+ First visit to Tanzania in 2001
+ Time out of NHS to serve on Mercy Ships
+ Now leads community nursing team at Northumbria
+ Lead Nurse for UK Aid project developing the first Burns Unit in Tanzania
An opportunity in 2008 to undertake an MSc project in Tanzania led to:

+ Renewed commitment to complete the NHS Management Trainee programme.
+ A strong interest in global health
+ Commitment to volunteering time to assist the development of healthcare services in less developed countries.
+ The impetus to complete an MSc in Development Management to support future international links involvement.
The launch of NHS Global
What can international links experience offer?

+ NHS links help to promote the NHS brand and enhance the NHS reputation internationally.
+ Healthcare professionals who take part in international links are able to function in a different cultural and geographical environment.
+ Links activities provide opportunities to experience teaching and training of international students.
+ It also provides a unique opportunity to be involved in the development of new services from grass roots level.
Spreading the word

+ Use a toolkit to capture the benefits of international links for NHS employers and include international work in your annual appraisal and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) submission.
+ Seize opportunities to raise awareness about your international work by giving presentations to business units and colleagues and feedback sessions to the trust board.
+ Gain public support by promoting what you do through the media, in photo exhibitions within the hospital and through local community networks
+ Spread the word – raise the profile – gain support
I believe that employees of the NHS who are involved in international work, we come back with renewed vigour and we’re more open minded, we appreciate the role of the NHS in health care as a whole for the nation, and then the role of that globally, we know what a wealth of resource it is and how lucky we are to have it….we come back with positivity, with energy and with hope really, and with dedication to healthcare, cos you know how massively important it is to every nation.