Pape Gaye | President and CEO, IntraHealth International

Sparked by his early experience teaching Peace Corps volunteers the Wolof language in his home country of Senegal, Pape Gaye has a life-long commitment to international development and bridging gaps across cultures. Gaye's passion is rooted in his firm belief that we have a moral obligation as global citizens to contribute our best to international development and global health. Gaye's inspiring personal journey has culminated in his leadership of IntraHealth International, a dynamic nonprofit that focuses on empowering health workers to better serve communities in need around the world.

Focusing on the health worker

Gaye is among the leading champions in the field of human resources for health, striving to address the estimated worldwide shortage of 4.3 million health workers through his engagement as a global advocate and by guiding IntraHealth's commitment to ensuring more health workers are present, ready, connected, and safe. Gaye's perspectives have been shaped by a career devoted to the idea that appropriately trained, highly motivated, and fairly compensated health workers are at the center of every health system. As he puts it, "At the end of the day, no matter how many technologies and medicines are made available and partnerships formed, without skilled and supported health workers there to provide care to those in need, health will not improve."

Promoting open technologies for health

Gaye is widely recognized in the global development community for his strong vision of the opportunities technology can play in strengthening health systems, supporting health workers, and enabling developing countries to drive, create, own, and sustain solutions to their health care challenges. To meet the need for improved health workforce information systems, Gaye channeled IntraHealth's resources into the development of free open source software solutions for health workforce planning, management, and tracking of training and licensure. Following invitations to join the Clinton Global Initiative in 2011 and 2012, Gaye has launched a commitment to catalyze the next generation of tech-savvy health workers in collaboration with interdisciplinary partners including Avallain, iHub, Intel, Medic Mobile and Safaricom.

Leading an organization that works and learns across cultures

When Gaye came to the United States to earn an MBA from the University of California at Los Angeles, he began pursuing a life-long interest: looking at management principles and approaches across cultures. Gaye applies this passion to his leadership of IntraHealth, which is also shaped by his many years of working in Africa. He joined the organization (then known as Intrah and part of the University of North Carolina) in 1986 as director of its West, Central, and North Africa regional office. Since Gaye assumed the role of president and CEO in September 2004, IntraHealth has branched out as an independent nonprofit and seen a fourfold increase in revenue and size. The organization has worked in almost 100 countries and Gaye now leads more than 600 employees supporting programs in health workforce and systems innovations, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, and maternal, newborn and child health, family planning, and malaria services.

At the core of Gaye's values—and the way IntraHealth works—are the principles of partnership, stakeholder engagement, and listening and learning from others. He believes that improving health care around the world requires the ability to understand and learn from other people's perspectives and cultural contexts and that this, in turn, fosters capacity building that encourages local innovation and ownership. "If you are truly interested in capacity building globally, you cannot look at the world as homogenous," he emphasizes. "I am always mindful that I cannot make assumptions about what people think or want, but am listening to better understand what they are telling me at all levels. I have learned that to lead in this area, one must have that open mind."

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