

EDITORIAL

New routes to the future

It is not that we live in times of crisis, but that time itself is in crisis. This has been said by Daniel Innerarity, one of the most poignant philosophers of our time. Perhaps this is one of the greatest differences between the *Escuela de Salud Pública de México* (ESPM) of 1922, when it was founded, and that of 2022 when it turns a hundred, now housed by the *Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública*. Both moments have been turbulent and fraught with uncertainty. In 1922, the revolutionary upheaval, threats of foreign invasion and the influenza pandemic gave way to apparent calm, only to be followed by the assassination of the former president of Mexico, who had been reelected to take office again, and by the *Crisisteros War* a few years later. Those were, no doubt, times of crisis. The present year is very different even though violence is perceived as it was perhaps perceived then, if for different reasons, and the instability of public policies is also a sign of both times. Today, I concur with Innerarity. The immediacy brought about by telecommunications technology with all its array of variants accelerates life to a degree that it seems unhinged. Many other technological developments and unprecedented social phenomena, unleashed thereby, make our present incomparable to any past. Time itself is in crisis. The past seems to be of no use in trying to anticipate the future, and the speed with which the future is approaching might lead one to consider the apparent impossibility that the future could very soon precede the present. To accentuate the phenomenon, the Covid-19 pandemic catalyzed the process. Such an environment demands new routes for public health education into the future. At this juncture, this centennial implies pondering on the next hundred years.

Let us explore new routes in the manner of Proust: the true voyage of discovery is not to find new lands but to see with new eyes. Faced with this unprecedented environment, it is necessary to think about what has not been seen or barely explored in the education of public health professionals for the years to come. Cleaning the slate, I propose five provocative topics that, among many others, could brighten the future history of the ESPM through new routes: salutogenesis, futures studies, complex systems, self-teaching, and human care.

Besides the concepts and methods taught in each of the fields of knowledge that converge in public health, if more than a century has been devoted to the study of pathogenesis, why not look at salutogenesis not as health promotion to avoid disease and prevention so that people do not get sick, but to unravel and understand how health is created and then act accordingly. The diabetes epidemic is just one example, perhaps the most illustrative of the pressing need to see with new eyes. If the future is fast approaching, why not use futures studies to learn to navigate seas of high uncertainty and turbulence? If today we know that life can no longer be explained as the result of linear processes, why not emphasize theory and research on complex systems in the territory of population health and disease? If the recent pandemic has made it evident that distance education and distance health are here to stay, why not incorporate this technology now for self-teaching, not only for students who will have to navigate the world of postmodernity, post-truth and malignant normality, but also for professors to learn to teach under this new paradigm? If there is so much talk about the need to place populations, communities, people and patients

at the center of health systems, why not start by defining human care—a concept that has been shown to be neither clear nor concrete nor actionable for health professionals, especially in times when the technology that surrounds us seems to be a watershed not only between past and future, but also between health personnel and the human care expectations of the population?

As I have said before, the future is created anew every day —so has it been for the ESPM over its one

hundred years of history. But just when you think it is determined, it is time to reinvent ourselves, to acknowledge departing into the unknown.

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