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**Experiences from an Online Educational
Program in Public Health: Peoples-uni**

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Introduction

Public Health deals with combined efforts to prevent a population from diseases, prolong life, therefore promoting good health.



Introduction

- Improving the health of populations requires the creation and application of evidence to health policies and interventions
- This can only be applied by an educated Public Health workforce
- There is large need for Public Health capacity in Low- to middle-income countries (LMICs)
- Peoples-uni (P-u) was established in 2008 to help build such Public Health capacity



Peoples-uni background

- ✧ Registered as a charity in the UK in 2008
- ✧ There are no physical offices – all activity is online through the Internet
- ✧ Trustees, IT group, Tutors, Education officers (all volunteers)
- ✧ Volunteer tutors come from more than 40 countries
- ✧ Use of volunteers and Open Educational Resources allows this to be offered at very low cost



Open Educational Resources, open source educational delivery via the Internet, volunteer faculty

**Course modules, certificate, diploma in
Public Health, MPH**

Skills for Public
Health practitioners

Collaboration
across countries

**Improve
health of the
public**

**Career
development for
practitioners**

**Best
practice**

Course-modules description

- Courses are based on the concept of open education resources (OER), freely available on the Internet.
- Course modules in two groups - the '[Foundation Sciences of Public Health](#)' and '[Public Health problems](#)'.
- 5 Topics for each module, with a set of resources
- Discussion forum for the exchange of ideas and the exploration of concepts between students and the tutor
- Assessment made by the submission of assignments designed to see if the competences have been achieved

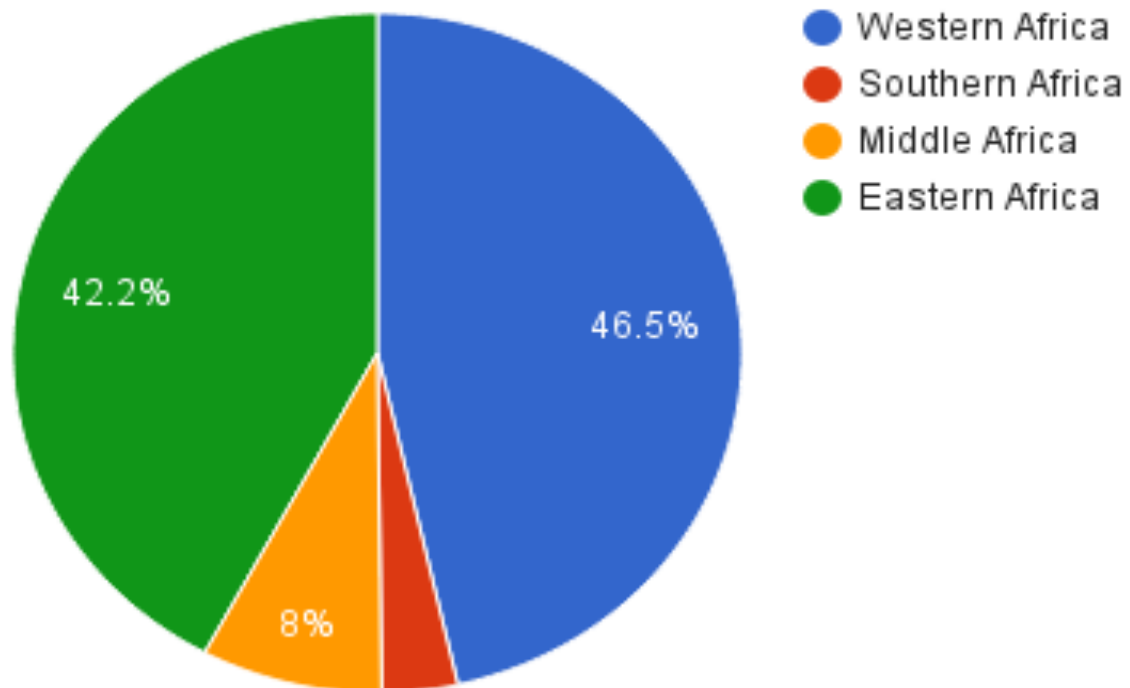
Course-modules description (cont'd)

- Use of best practice e-learning, with online facilitation by volunteer tutors and guide for facilitators
- Two Semesters a year, with a timetable for each module of 5 Topics run over two weeks
- 1 to 2 modules/ semester
- Individual modules for CPD; 4 modules for Certificate; 6 for Diploma; for Masters add a Dissertation. All modules at Masters level and carry 20 credits

Some student/volunteer numbers to 2015

- Numbers enrolled: **1,283**
 - From Africa: **924 (72%)**
 - From Indian subcontinent: **168 (13%)**
 - Others from Asia, Middle East, Europe
-
- Total number of volunteers: **>200**
 - Total number of active tutors: **120**
 - Total number of MPH graduates: **100!**

African Region of Peoples-uni students



MPH award

- A partnership with a UK University has allowed 80 students to graduate with an MPH from them, based on study with Peoples-uni
- We seek local African partner Universities for similar collaboration

My experiences

- ✧ An alumni since 2014
- ✧ Volunteer as a tutor
- ✧ Student Support Officer
- ✧ Volunteered in social media platforms

The Role of NRENs and TRNET

The National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) works to deliver sustainable capacity building frameworks in communities.

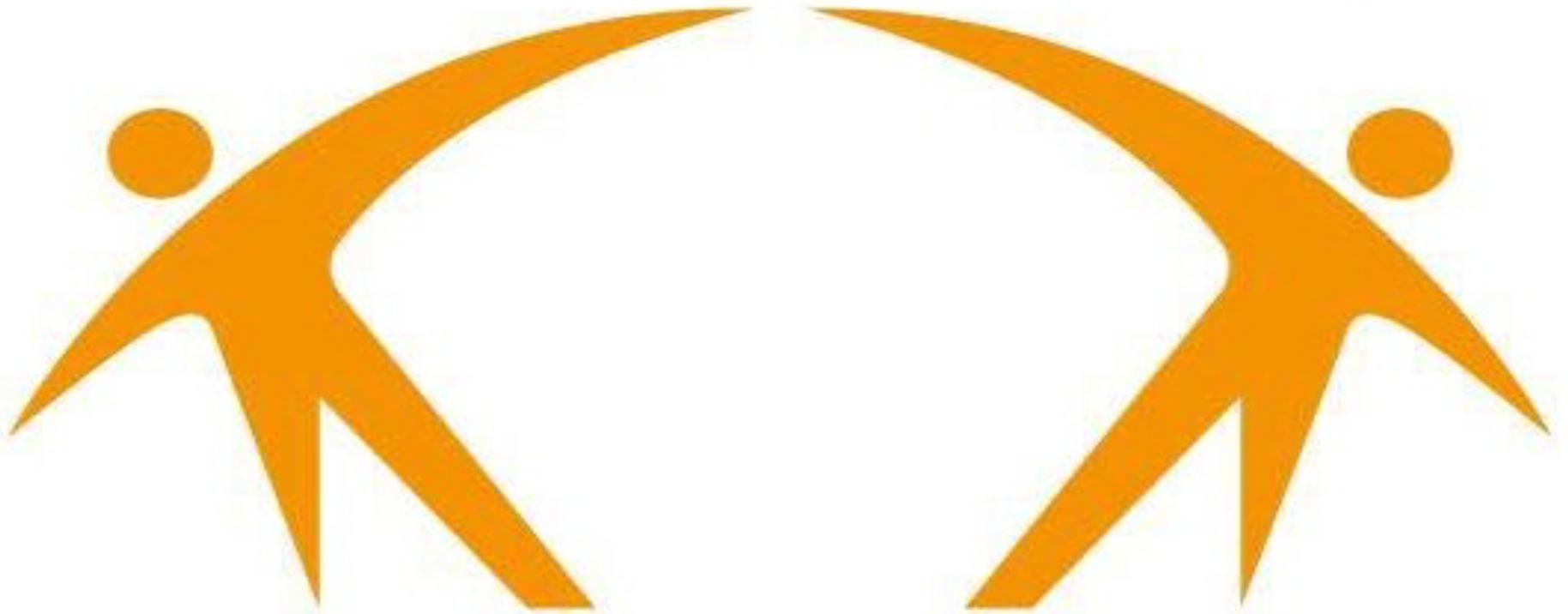
The Tanzania Education and Research Network (TERNET) is driving a collaboration with Pu and other stakeholders to facilitate mass training and this is expected to make an impact on public health capacity in Tanzania, especially with the emphasis on critical thinking and on an evidence based approach.

Future work & Current developments

Currently..

- ✧ Alumni of 100 MPH graduates.
- ✧ Peer reviewed publications by graduates.
- ✧ Volunteers from all over the world including alumni.
- ✧ Open online courses with >1,000 registered.

Peoples-uni Open Online Courses



<http://:ooc.peoples-uni.org>

Self paced courses: Public Health, Epidemiology,
Climate Change, Ethics, Human Rights etc.

(Global Health Informatics under development).



Towards an African Institute of Public Health

- Leverage the strengths of Peoples-uni Alumni
- Partner with others
- Facilitated by modern IT infrastructure and networking
- Inspiration comes from the African Economic Research Collaboration <http://aercafrica.org/>

Towards an African Institute of Public Health

1. An alumni-led identification and prioritization of problems that need to be addressed by the African and the global public health communities through research and evidence;
2. Creation of ongoing “space” (forums etc) with key African policy makers to support and spread the buy-in from governing organizations of the prioritized problems;

Towards an African Institute of Public Health

3. Build ongoing connections with leading Public Health academics (and academic organizations) to develop a research agenda around the prioritized problems;
4. Utilize the social capital of both the existent alumni network and the invited policy and academic network members to develop actions and strategies around the prioritized areas for action.

Towards an African Institute of Public Health

5. Education – to build on the expertise of the Alumni (and similar) to 'snowball' capacity building through online courses (such as those available through Peoples-uni

<http://courses.peoples-uni.org/> and its sister

Open Online Courses

<http://ooc.peoples-uni.org>

Conclusion

P-u has created an excellent platform for:

- ✧ Learning and capacity building.
- ✧ Continues to give opportunities for students to attain an academic degree for professional development.
- ✧ Given me an opportunity to interact with other tutors and students and learn from their experiences in the public health field.
- ✧ An alumni forum for further collaborations and research

Acknowledgements



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<http://peoples-uni.org>



Amos Nungu (TERNET)



Omo Oaiya (Peoples Uni)



Thank you for your attention

