

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH PROMOTION AND CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN AFRICA

6TH CDC/IUHPE ANNUAL SEMINAR ON CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH PROMOTION AND CHRONIC DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY

July 8th – 18th 2009 in Entebbe, Uganda

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Seminar objectives:

Following five successful years working together with multi-disciplinary teams from both West and East Africa, the 2009 CDC/IUHPE 6th Annual Seminar on Cardiovascular Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Epidemiology in sub-Saharan Africa brought together experienced international faculty and participants from three countries – Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

The course aimed to build capacity to address the increasing non-communicable disease (NCD) burden of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes, with a focus on prevention through population-based health promotion interventions and policies in sub-Saharan Africa. It also addressed risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD), such as physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and smoking.

The course objective was to provide the tools to enable participants to:

1. Understand the principles and practice of surveillance for NCD;
2. Understand the principles of health promotion for NCD control;
3. Acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the epidemiology of cardiovascular disease in Africa;
4. Understand how to build/work with a multi-disciplinary team to achieve health promotion goals;
5. Be able to formulate a plan for CVD risk factor control
6. Be able to train other health professionals on lessons learnt.

The lectures were structured to embrace five major areas:

1. General principles and rationale of: (i) Health promotion and chronic disease prevention in Africa; ii) Basic public health and epidemiology; iii) Surveillance for CVD and risk factors in the African context; iv) Evaluation plans and designs; v) Project development (core principles and expectations); vi) Integrated approach to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) prevention and control;
2. Prevention of specific diseases and/or risk behaviors;

3. Partnerships;
4. Data collection and methods;
5. Communication, advocacy, social marketing, etc.

Seminar preparation:

Over the 2008-2009 programmatic year, 6 teleconferences with members of the faculty were held in order to prepare and adapt the annual event addressing the recommendations outlined in the report of the comprehensive independent evaluation of the first four seminars in this series.

Seminar structure:

Over the 10 days of the seminar duration, lectures around guest faculty areas of expertise were held in the mornings and afternoons were dedicated for teams to develop appropriate health promotion and disease prevention activities. Team projects development was guided by various members of the faculty who provided a unique expert perspective to inform the team project development and ensure synergistic team dynamics. The concluding sessions consisted in each country team presenting their project to members of the faculty and fellow teams. Strengths and weaknesses were discussed informing modifications and revision of their proposal.

The 6th Annual Seminar built on the 2008 seminar and continued the delivery of a module on physical activity and health promotion by Professor Vicky Lambert, an expert in the field of physical activity and health promotion working in South Africa, symbol of a strong commitment to adopting a more holistic approach to Cardiovascular Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention.

Additionally, past team leaders from the Western Africa seminar series (Dr Jacob Plange-Rhule from Ghana, Professor Michael Balogun from Nigeria, Mr. Karamo Kanteh from Gambia and Professor Adesola Ogunniyi from Nigeria) were invited to share their experiences in the African region following the 2004-2007 courses. Participants felt this input to be extremely valuable. It is important to remember that one key objective of the initiative is for fellows and team leaders to be able to train others.

However, the 2009 seminar witnessed a weakness in the absence of Dr. George Mensah, faculty and expert in the field. Over the past five years, Dr. Mensah provided a unique aspect to this programme, taking current state of the art approaches to multiple risk factor control and cardiovascular disease prevention and control and adapting them for usability in different parts of the world and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and contributed to building local capacity in the region through multi-disciplinary teams training, follow-up and support following the seminar. The topics were presented by other members of the faculty.

Addressing Recommendations from the Independent Evaluation of the first four CDC/IUHPE Annual Seminars to inform improved seminar

Recommendation 1: Conceptually and practically restructure the Annual Seminars to begin prior to and continue after the two week in-person meeting.

- Regular monthly teleconferences with members of the faculty to prepare the seminar were held for six months prior to the event;
- Work sheets were developed and sent to selected teams encouraging them to meet in order to start gathering information around country data, start the thinking process around project development and start building team dynamics;
- This year, a session focusing on team dynamics was held at the start of the seminar to strengthen team spirit. This session was reported to be the most useful sessions after the health promotion set of lectures in the evaluations and some participants felt the preparatory work had been very valuable in building the team and was useful to develop team projects;
- During the seminar the teams were informed that the 6th CDC/IUHPE Annual Seminar marked the end of this seminar series and were updated on the progress of the discussions with members of the faculty along with past and present team leaders, CDC colleagues and WHO/AFRO around capitalizing on the past efforts (a six-year investment) and existing resources (ongoing commitment and engagement of professionals, a network of dedicated experts, and a website – platform for keeping the momentum) and ensuring the initiative formed the foundation for continued cardiovascular health promotion and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) prevention and control in sub-Saharan Africa;
- Seminar participants were also debriefed on the results of the evaluation forms they completed on day 5 and day 10 of the training and on the tools that would be made available for them (i.e. CVHP website and the format it would take). The evaluation summary also informed and shaped to a certain extent discussions around the development of the '*Building Capacity for Cardiovascular Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention and Control in sub-Saharan Africa*' website involving members of the faculty along with past and present team leaders;
- As in previous years, at the end of the course the participants received a certificate acknowledging their successful participation in the training and a USB flash drive with all seminar materials along with contact details of faculty, other participants, and project staff to ensure ongoing communication beyond the seminar;
- The seminar also resulted in 11 people expressing their interest in the field of health promotion and joining the International Union for Health Promotion and Education

(IUHPE) or renewing their membership to the network, with a few additional participants interested in joining online;

- After the seminar, the participants will be kept updated on the progress and launch of the 'Building Capacity for Cardiovascular Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention and Control in sub-Saharan Africa' website, and any information relevant and/or of potential relevance to the participants along with updates on the IUHPE 20th World Conference on Health Promotion and other activities in the field and in the region;
- Finally, as in previous years the regional coordinating team at the African Institute for Health and Development (AIHD) will be the main contact point for country teams and will assist in making funds available for various projects developed during the seminar as well as keeping records of the progress of past and present team projects.

Recommendation 2: *Establish clear expectations among Team Leaders regarding opportunities and limitations of IUHPE support of activities associated with the Annual Seminars.*

- Teams were informed that the 6th CDC/IUHPE Annual Seminar on Cardiovascular Health Promotion and Chronic Disease epidemiology would be the last one in the series;
- Teams were also informed that the funds available in 2009 for the small projects developed during the seminar were in the range of 2,000.00 US\$ per country team and that these funds could either be used to strengthen ongoing projects developed during past seminars or to contribute to initiating the projects developed during this 2009 training;
- Moreover, since 2009 marked the end of the CDC/IUHPE seminar series, two meetings gathering past and present team leaders as well as members of the faculty and WHO/AFRO were organized to discuss capitalizing on past efforts (a six-year investment) and existing resources (ongoing commitment and engagement of professionals, a network of dedicated experts, and a website – platform for keeping the momentum); and ensuring the initiative forms the foundation for continued cardiovascular health promotion and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) prevention and control in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Finally, team leaders and members of the faculty engaged in discussions around the development of the 'Building Capacity for Cardiovascular Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention and Control in sub-Saharan Africa' website and contributed to the final shape agreed upon for this main resource/tool.

Recommendation 3: *Re-conceptualize the Annual Seminars format to promote an Integrated Non Communicable Disease Prevention and Control approach. By using the IUHPE’s experience, expertise and leadership as an approach to capacity building in Sub-Saharan Africa, modifications to current program content areas would lay a solid foundation of integrated non communicable disease prevention and control with the potential to elaborate specific conditions such as obesity, diabetes, cancer, and hypertension.*

- The 6th CDC/IUHPE Annual Seminar had a clearer focus on using an integrated approach towards preventing and controlling NCDs in Africa;
- One of the major changes and addition was the integration of discussions around the objectives of the 2008-2013 WHO Action Plan for the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of NCDs which was provided to course participants as one of the main references;
- Moreover, the seminar consciously increased the African input with a proportion of African members of the faculty increased from 50% in 2008 to 60% in 2009, the integration of WHO/AFRO in the faculty, and a greater emphasis on sharing of experiences in the African context with past and present team leaders presenting on their work developed, based on the training received.

Recommendation 4: *Incorporate ongoing process, impact, and outcome evaluation measures for the Annual Seminars specifically.*

- The evaluation tools developed during the comprehensive evaluation, conducted by Dr Dianne Rucinski and Dr Risé Jones from the Institute for Health Research and Policy, School of Public Health of the University of Illinois-Chicago, were adapted for informal evaluation of the seminar. Synthesis and analysis of the evaluation forms completed at day 5 and day 10 were presented and shared with the participants;
- Evaluation results were taken into consideration when meeting around the development of the ‘Building Capacity for Cardiovascular Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention and Control in sub-Saharan Africa’ website and informed the shape of this major tool.

Seminar outcomes:

The participants attending this seminar are hoped to have acquired the knowledge and skills to advocate for public health policies, promote healthy lifestyles, develop relevant health promotion programs and interventions, and create supportive environments to maximize risk reduction and enhance disease prevention and health development in their respective country.

Each year, pre-seminar and post-seminar surveys are completed by the participants anonymously to assess the groups general level of knowledge around issues on cardiovascular health and related topics taught throughout the course before and upon completion of the seminar. This year the average score of the group improved by 3.5% from 65.6% at the start to 69.1% at the end of the course. Although no statistical analysis has been conducted on this data, it appears that the course did improve immediate knowledge around cardiovascular health promotion principles, practices and workforce skills.

Additionally, the 6th CDC/IUHPE Annual Seminar on Cardiovascular Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Epidemiology enabled the team leaders to provide an update on the progress of the past team projects. The progress of all team projects was reported and progress reports are available upon request at the regional coordination team within AIHD.

Following up the progress of team works is sometimes a challenge for team leaders due to their commitment to other projects. This year two of the teams had a member acting as deputy team leader as a result of a felt need by members of the faculty for deputy team leaders to systematically be in place in order to enable better sustained progress of team projects and to facilitate follow-up and time investment to implement the projects efficiently.

Seminar feedback:

Since the completion of the 6th Annual Seminar on Cardiovascular Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Epidemiology, a number of communications sharing views, experience and feedback on these events have been received. A few examples of the feedback are provided below:

Just a note to say thank you so much for the course you organised. Being my first ever professional course, I must say I learnt a lot and I will definitely be a better ambassador of health promotion starting with my field. The certificate I obtained at this course will stand along my many other academic achievements and I would never have gotten this opportunity if CDC/IUHPE had not come up with these courses. All the best and I sincerely hope other people can have a chance to learn more and as much as we did. Thanks for the good work and we shall continue to spread the positive messages. – Diana Kenyangi Beijuka – Nutritionist and Uganda Team member.

I would like to acknowledge IUHPE and CDC for this six year effort as this capacity is really needed in our country (Kenya) – Dorcas Kiptui - Programme Officer for Tobacco Control

and CVD Prevention and control, Division of Non-Communicable Diseases, Ministry of Health, Kenya and Kenya Nairobi team member.

I too enjoyed the training and benefited a lot from it. As a journalist, sitting together with the medical experts was a kind of rare opportunity as I was able to get to learn more details about CVDs going by their contributions that I found to be very beneficial to my day to day operation. I must admit that I developed a number of contacts that are going to be of use to me professionally in future whenever I have a story on cardiovascular diseases. These contacts include even members of the Kenya team that I met for the first time during the training. I think the setting was unique and can be developed further by involving more journalists to attend such forums for the main reason of understanding CVDs and be able to report comfortably on the subjects. Going by the topics covered, I came to realise that attending press conference does not help much before one gets in-depth knowledge of the subject. Duncan Mboyah, Science Journalist, AWC Features, Kenya.

It was such an outstanding experience! Peace Hadoto, Social worker and course assistant, Uganda.

I am grateful for your tireless effort and commitment in the race of sensitizing the African community and reducing on the occurrence of CVDs. I have read these articles and I feel happy of how the matter has been addressed in these target countries. Currently I am in India for a one year course on CVDs based in the coronary care unit at Madras Medical Mission hospital. My humble request and concern is that may you please help Uganda to participate more actively in this race, I will be back in Uganda next year February, hoping to meet and join my Uganda team 2 and continue with the activities. Monica Nikisige, Uganda Team member 2008.

This was my first participation. The course was quite packed but given the time constraint, it had a good mix of basic epidemiology and statistics with a range of primary prevention and health promotion measures against the NCDs. I feel that the participants can use these to better their understanding of NCD prevention and help develop strategies and programmes that can effectively reduce NCDs burden in the community. From the presentations of the different country teams it appears that participants do grasp what is given to them and that they are able to use this knowledge effectively. We are in a resource-limited region and these training programmes are very useful and the topic addressed very relevant. I hope that these seminars will continue and be expanded. Chandralall Sookram, WHO AFRO and member of the 2009 faculty.

The Seminars have been most useful in providing information on the increasing burden of chronic cardiovascular diseases related to lifestyle changes in sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries through didactic lectures and feedback from previous groups trained on the programme. It has helped in building capacity in the area of health promotion and in emphasizing cost-effective measures based on successful programmes in other parts of the world. The selection process of participants was commendable with a good

mix of individuals from policy makers to journalists, academics etc. The focus had been on those who yearned to make a difference and those actively involved with various aspects of cardiovascular health.

It is a programme that has great potential in improving health indices in SSA. This has been elegantly shown in the series of country-based intervention programmes developed and at various stages of completion at the moment. It has been demonstrated that much can be achieved with the right ideas and good guidance without being too expensive.

I believe the next series of seminars, starting with Ghana next year, will address. I whole-heartedly endorse its continuation with necessary support and other logistics.

On the whole, it has been a great success from its inception in 2004 till the last one that took place in Entebbe, Uganda in July 2009. Adesola Ogunniyi, team leader and member of the faculty (2004 -2009).

Media coverage of the event

Finally, in-country media (The New Vision (Uganda newspaper), WBS TV (Uganda TV), UBC Uganda Broadcasting Cooperation (Radio station) and the Daily Monitor (Ugandan newspaper)) covered the 6th CDC/IUHPE Annual Seminar on Cardiovascular Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Epidemiology event.

Cross-fertilization with other initiatives in the region – Pre-seminar events

Recognizing the increasing importance of NCDs including cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory infections, among others in sub-Saharan Africa, the Department of Health, UK funded the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) and the African Institute for Health & Development (AIHD) to initiate a process of guiding and supporting countries in the region in NCD prevention and control. As part of this process, an NCD and Health Promotion advocacy meeting was held in Bagamoyo, Tanzania in August 2008. The meeting brought together over 55 participants from different countries and with varied expertise.¹ During the Bagamoyo meeting, two *ad hoc* groups were formed: an *Expert Group*² and a *Partner Forum*. The Expert Group was composed of researchers, academics and practitioners in NCDs in Africa³ including Dr Pascal Bovet, Dr Vicki Lambert, Dr George Mensah, Dr Jacob

¹Participants were drawn from nine African countries: East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania); West Africa – Anglophone (Ghana and Nigeria); West Africa – Francophone (Benin); Central Africa (Cameroon) and Southern Africa (Zambia and South Africa). Other participants were drawn from the global health promotion and NCD community including the International Union for Health Promotion and Education, the World Health Organization (HQ, and AFRO), the Department of Health, UK, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and international/regional associations.

²The Expert Group members are: Dr. Pascal Bovet; Dr. Edward Ddumba; Prof. Gregory Erhabor; Prof. Majid Ezzati; Dr. Vicki Lambert; Dr. Bongani Mayosi; Dr. Jean-Claude Mbanya; Ms. Anne McMikel; Dr. George Mensah; Prof. Maurice Mittelmark; Prof. Groesbeck Parham and Dr. Jacob Plange-Rhule.

³The Partner Forum was comprised of organizations present at the meeting with interest in NCD and in health in general in the sub-Saharan African Region including: the International Union for Health Promotion and Education

Plange-Rhule (members of the CDC/IUHPE Annual Seminars on Cardiovascular Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Epidemiology).

In July 2009, the groups reconvened in Entebbe, Uganda, preceding the 6th CDC/IUHPE Annual Seminar on Cardiovascular Health Promotion, and agreed to form a **Consortium** that would encompass associations, organizations and individuals working on NCD in the region with the goal of: **Addressing NCDs in sub-Saharan African through the concerted efforts of key players in the region.**

A joint session (IUHPE and ACS (American Cancer Society)) on the ***New Frontiers for the sustainable prevention and control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs): Creating Political Willingness to develop NCD plans and align action on NCDs within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*** was held. Recognising the urgency for attention to NCDs, the session attempted to discuss various issues relevant to the sub-Saharan African region such as:

- What is needed to address NCDs?
- What must be done?

The discussions from this session will be published in a commentary in the upcoming supplement issue of the IUHPE official quarterly peer-reviewed publication *Global Health Promotion* focusing on **Health Promotion Strategies and Non-Communicable Disease Control in Africa.**

Cross-fertilization between the three events presented a great opportunity to not only bridge with the Cardiovascular Health Promotion seminar series in sub-Saharan Africa but also engage in an interactive meeting to attempt to move the field of policy development for non-communicable disease control forward in the region.

(IUHPE); the World Health Organization (WHO); the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); the World Bank (Tanzania); the East Africa Community; the UK Department for International Development (DFID); and the American Cancer Society.