Collaborative effort to build capacity for Universities in the reduction of the occupational injuries and diseases among workers in Tanzania.

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Abstract

Introduction: Workers represent half the world's population and are the major contributors to economic and social development. However, millions of men and women have paid work which is performed under poor and hazardous conditions. Lack of adequate workforces to curb the situation faces countries in developing countries. The project aims at building capacity for the university in Tanzania and Ethiopia in collaboration with University of Bergen so as to produce faculty and workforce for quality research and training in occupational health. The effort start during the Fogarty International project for southern Africa and followed by NORAD project.

Methods: The Universities in Tanzania(MUHAS) and Ethiopia (Addis Ababa University(AAU)) and one in Norway (University of Bergen (UiB)) are working together to build capacity of their institution in terms improving teaching quality and increase number of teaching staff, improve laboratory and library enhancement and online training. The project started in 2014 and will end in 2019.. The development of an online course on occupational health. Skype and biannual meetings in Tanzania and partners are used for regular communication among participants

Results: A total of thirty five master students graduated in Occupational health and Safety. Three PhD and four postdoctoral candidates have done research in occupational epidemiology, combined with exposure studies. Two laboratories have been strengthened by procurement of equipment laboratory rebuilding. One Online course developed and a book produced. Thirty four original manuscripts has been published in peer review journals and thirty one abstracts are presented in conferences. A gender sensitization workshops has been held at MUHAS and AAU. The knowledge sharing between AAU, MUHAS and UiB helped the project team. The department of environmental and Occupational health in 2006 has 3 faculty, Osha has 2, Tanzania occupational health Services had 2 and at that time Workes Compensation Fund did not exist. The various collaborations starting from Forgart /NIH , WAHSA, Nufu and NORAD create the substancial number of competent occupational specialist and laboratory facilities to facilitate sampling of occupational exposures and analysis.

Conclusion: The increased number of Occupational health practitioner in the country has increased due to the effort done by several players in the region(SA) and elsewhere by different projects and at different times such as Wahsa, Norad, Nuffic, Forgaty International/NIH. The current increase and university capacity are able to reproduce more workers now to cater the country's need that have not reached using the best modal.