Health Care Services and Health Care training in Kilifi -

Kenya



Community Health Promotion Fund - North Coast MTC – Newsletter 6 – June 2020

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1. Introduction

The newsletter which we intended to send out three months ago, mid-March, was starting with the words "Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher wrote: "Nothing endures but change" and how applicable this was in the field of education and specifically at North Coast Medical Training College (North Coast MTC) as we were getting into 2020. The newsletter was not sent as then in the same week, the whole world and our world changed more than we had wished for due to COVID-19!



Three months later, we finally find ourselves in a situation again that we feel ready to share a much updated newsletter. As those who have been used to the newsletter of Community Health Promotion Fund (CHPF) will note – it is a bit different. As we are working with more and more partners to improve health and health care in Kenya with a focus on Kilifi County, we thought it appropriate to change a bit and refocus the newsletter.

In this newsletter information about North Coast MTC before and during COVID-19 and the support CHPF has been able to provide through its collaboration with partners. In addition, information about Stichting Wanawa which has been a continuous partner of North Coast MTC and CHPF over the past 8 years. And last but not least, information about the NUFFIC project in which we are collaborating with various Kenyan partners as well as some other long term partners of North Coast MTC in Netherlands: The School of Health Professions Education at Maastricht University, the Hanze University Foundation together with Hanze University of Applied Science, and Skills-Meducation BV.

I hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter and that if enables you to travel in your imagination, now that it has become impossible to physically reach Kenya from abroad and very difficult to travel within.

Stay well stay safe!

Marianne Darwinkel Trustee-Secretary CHPF Director North Coast MTC

2. North Coast Medical Training College

Before COVID-19

North Coast MTC was born out of need for competent health workers. It has committed itself to offer education which stimulates and nurtures necessary competencies in learners to enable them to actively participate in healthcare reforms in Kenya. In all our courses we try to commit ourselves to the following ideals:



- 1. Give opportunity to all students regardless of gender, creed, or colour, to pursue their passion in the healthcare profession, and become the best they can be.
- 2. Adopt teaching strategies that nurture and support pragmatism, critical thinking and lifelong learning skills.
- 3. Provide necessary tools and resources that enable effective and efficient learning.
- 4. Create an environment that fosters and mediates experiences to support student learning; and give a wider perspective of prevalent health issues in the local and wider community.
- 5. Develop behavioural goals and establish re-enforcers to drive to the highest professional and ethical standards.
- 6. Help health students to develop personal and social values so that they become thoughtful and mindful of the sick and weak in the community.



Nursing students learning how to do vena puncture and clinical medicine students during laboratory practice

In 2019 and 2020 North Coast MTC continued to train students in the existing disciplines while two new courses were added. First of all a six-month bridging course for community health assistants which gives students who did not perform well in secondary school a chance to enter community health training. Upon successful completion of the bridging course, they can enter the regular certificate course in Community Health. Secondly, we added a course in nephrology nursing. This is an upgrading one year course for qualified nurses to specialize in renal care and dialysis. The course is mainly workplace based; theory is facilitated through e-learning and clinical area sessions, and there are about six face-to-face sessions to present, strengthen specific topics which require more attention and evaluate progress of learning. Also, from September 2019, we made the first concerted efforts across the college to integrate community service more in the learning of the students. This included community outreach activities for groups of students on every weekday afternoon.



Nutrition students during cooking & catering practicum and students and staff during community outreach

Over this period, the college was supported by Comundo, a Swiss organization, with the placement of a physician specialized in acute care and ultrasound. Besides being involved with training of students, he also assisted in developing an ultrasound training curriculum and helped several staff to be trained in ultrasound. However, as a college we did not have ultrasound equipment, so for practice, we were dependent on using equipment in other facilities. Towards the end of the year we received an individual donation which helped to purchase an ultrasound probe which can connect to a screen, like a smart phone or tablet, and in that way have a device that can easily be used in various settings.

In addition to the regular training, staff and students also participated many times in other community outreaches throughout the year. The college in collaboration with other like-minded organizations held free medical camps in Kilifi County, Mombasa County and Tana River County.



College staff having a training session with some students on ultrasound in pregnancy in a nearby health centre



Patients and two of our students attending to them during a medical camp at Sosobora in Kilifi County where 140 patients were attended to.



Patients at free medical camp at Nyali Children and Women Hospital in Mombasa County and with one of our students taking blood pressure of the member of parliament for Mvita – Hon. Abdiswamad Sharrif



Staff of the Dutch organization Medical Checks for Children together with students of the college while they attended to a total of 732 patients during six days of medical outreaches at different locations in Kilifi-South

During 2019 the college was visited by quite a number of officials from the regulatory bodies as well as from the government to see how we were progressing in various areas. We also had two graduations – one in June and one in December and graduated a total of 111 students.



December graduation with guest of honour Johnson Nanjakululu of the Ministry of Higher Education presiding over certification of students



Minister of Health Hon. Sicily Kariuki (middle), minister of Tourism Hon. Najib Balala, Kilifi South Member of Parliament Hon. Ken Chonga visiting the college in April 2019

During COVID-19

Just like the rest of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic and measures to contain it disrupted "Kenyan-life-as-we-know-it" from mid-March. The first case was diagnosed in Kenya on 12th March; four days later all primary and secondary school had closed, and by 20th March all tertiary education institutions had followed. No more face-to-face learning was allowed. As North Coast MTC, computer assisted education had already taken off earlier on. However, the possibility of still using other methods had caused quite wide disparities between staff: those who liked computer-assisted education were

quite ahead of those who did not like it. From 20th March, there was no choice. All courses now had to continue through the online system and we moved from computer-assisted education to full blown e-learning in a blink. Those staff who were behind had no choice but to catch up. This became our silver lining on the dark cloud of COVID-19 as this was exactly the direction foreseen in the strategic plan of the school and COVID-19 created the circumstances in which it could now flourish.

Of course, it was not an easy transition, neither for staff, nor for students. But somehow, people coped and students were working from whichever rural village they were connecting. Eventually, out of about 530 students there were only about 10 who really had no access to a smart phone or other forms of connectivity. We were eventually able to assist them with a smart phone through a "lease and buy" fund that we established.

Staff also worked tremendously hard as the transition to full e-learning needed a lot of effort and time from everyone. And all this came against the backdrop that the measures to contain COVID-19 came at a high cost - very many people in Kenya lost their source of income, even more so in the coastal area where jobs are highly dependent on transport and tourism. It was clear from early April that the ability of parents to pay school fees was extremely restricted. College staff all agreed to large reductions on their salary from April onwards to keep things moving. To the students', and, by extension, to the college's rescue, came AFAS Foundation. This Dutch Foundation who has since assisted many students whose parents lost their income due to COVID-19 with a bursary. The sacrifices of the staff together with the support from the AFAS foundation made it possible for the college to continue functioning through these difficult times.

By mid-June, we can confidently say that all our staff and students are well able to teach and learn through the e-learning platform, that virtual meetings and class registration are taking place daily, that written and oral exams have been conducted online, and that we are busy preparing for our first virtual graduation. Of course, perfection is often not achieved,

but we have moved forward a lot. The NUFFIC project (see below) should enable us to move much further ahead and with much more perfection – but we have taken off!



Artist support to spread health messages



Daily government updates



Borders closed and all cases and contacts forcefully quarantined



Emphasis on washing hands



Sewing facemasks at Bomani dispensary to wear in public spaces





Food donations for many people who struggle to survive

One important aspect of training that has however been seriously affected by having been forced to learn from home for three months now, is the practical training – Skillslab training, laboratory work, involvement of students in clinical work and community outreaches, all of it was forced to stop. In September when school is expected to be back on in full, practical training will have to be our main focus, and again, the NUFFIC project should contribute to that substantially. Under a mixed mode funding of the college itself, donations & grants, and a bank loan, the college is currently constructing a building that among other learning spaces, should include a great Skillslab!



Staff site visit to the new tuition block of which the new Skillslab will be part - with social distancing...

NUFFIC project

As staff and managers of North Coast Medical Training College, we were exhilarated when we received the news early January 2020 that together with our Dutch and Kenyan Partners we had been awarded a NUFFIC grant to support development of skills in healthcare education. That was a great milestone that will build on several curriculum innovations implemented over the last few years. Through this project we hope to improve health professions education within the college and in the region, develop exemplary Skillslab training that will help our students and serve as an example to others, develop additional curricula, improve e-learning, and better integrate community based education and services.

Between January and March we had several meetings at the Netherlands Embassy because the main precondition to receive the grant was that we had to include more explicitly a component of Private-Public-Partnership (PPP) in the project. That was not a light task as, despite the college being in all kind of private public partnerships, we did not have much "theoretical knowledge" on the matter! However, it turned out that one of our Kenyan partners, Pwani University, had already quite some experience on PPP and together with the various stakeholders we managed to amend the proposal to include PPP. By 31st March 2020 this preparatory trajectory was completed and we could now start focusing on the implementation of the project though implementation was then immediately hampered and altered through the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the e-learning, as shared above, the effects overall are probably on the positive side. The project is supporting an e-learning course for the e-learning coordinator of the college in, yes, e-learning! Two researches have started to establish the needs to be addressed in Kenyan training institutions and among health workers who want to upgrade, to make e-learning a success. The team supporting e-learning improvements was best

prepared to quickly start virtual meetings and are already preparing plans on how to implement training and support activities to improve e-learning, digital materials, etcetera, in COVID-19 compatible ways.

Several staff were to go for training in the Netherlands and could not go because of travel restrictions – Kenyan airspace closed late March and has not opened since. Others started but through e-learning rather than face-to-face which affected some other activities that were connected to their visits. Of course, that is a pity, but we are trying to find other ways to virtually visit, and of course "good things come to those who wait"!



NUFFIC team meeting with Geraldine Beaujean and Emmaline Brouwer from Maastricht University and Reuben Waswa, Bernard Mosongo and Marianne Darwinkel from North Coast MTC

Other activities of the NUFFIC project have also started, like the development of new curricula and the preparation for the construction and equipment of the new Skillslab and training of staff on Skillslab related matters. The teams to guide activities to improve community based education and services and the PPP activities are likely to become take of later this month. All in all, a rather unexpected and different start of the NUFFIC project from how we had foreseen it when we drafted the project in October and November 2019 – but we are enjoying the challenge to use very different ways to achieve the same set objectives!

3. Community Health Promotion Fund

CHPF supports activities in healthcare services and healthcare training. In North Coast MTC it has supported many projects in the past to get the college on its feet. Right now, the main program in North Coast MTC is support of students through study loans. Incidentally specific projects are supported if they cannot yet be paid from the school fees. In addition, CHPF supports primary healthcare services in the coastal area of Kenya, with emphasis on Kilifi-South.

Supporting healthcare students

In 2015 CHPF went into collaboration with the Higher Education Loans Board of Kenya to create a study loan fund. Deprived students from North Coast MTC can borrow from this fund to pay for their studies. By early 2020, almost 600 disbursements had been made from this fund. The fund has made an impact in the lives of 323 students (the majority received more than once), 174 girls and 149 boys. At inception, the fund started with KES 1.3 million (about \leq 11,000) and it has grown to a fund of 23.1 million (about \leq 200,000) by closure of 2019. Last year, the first ex-students who were assisted, started repaying in earnest; about \leq 5,000 was recovered and issued again to other students. In the coming years, the fund should be able to support quite a number of the new students from this rotating fund, rather than rely on donations alone. The fund has contributed to building capacity specifically in the health sector by empowering dreams of students pursuing various diploma and certificate health courses. Most of the students who received a study loan in 2019 were supported through the generous support from Friends of the Medical Mission Sisters and Dioraphte Foundation, KS Foundation, Van Donk De Grote Foundation, Dutch Flower Foundation and the Hofsteede Foundation.

From time to time, some students are in such desperate situations and have taken so many loans already that we try to give them an additional bursary support. In 2019 we were able to do that with the help of several individuals as well as the organization "Friends of the Medical Mission Sisters". In 2019 we were able to provide 25 students with an additional bursary.

Daniel is one of the students who received additional bursaries after having taken several study loans. He is an excellent clinical medicine student who finished his course work in September 2019 and is currently doing his internships. He experienced a lot of challenges during his childhood; many related to growing up with a stepfather who did not accept him and who did not want to pay his school fees. This forced Daniel to work in farms to fend for himself and his fees to complete secondary. We became aware of his situation when Daniel missed so many classes as he was tilting the land and trying to sell the harvest to pay for fees, accommodation, food, and still also try to assist his mother and brother. His mother is not doing well also and Daniel had to assist her even more when his stepfather died in 2018.

Another student who was assisted is Esther. She is a nursing student who joined the college in March 2018. Her mum is a single mother and earns whatever she can but very little as a casual doing farm work. Her story resembles to some level the story of Daniel, with a stepfather who did not want to contribute to her upbringing. Esther's elder sister decided to get married to escape from the hostile environment at home and her older brother dropped out of secondary school but was lucky to be helped by a friend to become a mechanic. Esther did well in her secondary school exams in 2016 but had to stay at home a whole year trying to earn some money to get some funds to start training as a nurse. She is a very hard working student who is doing very well in class and also has a strong commitment to help others through the peer education system in the college of which she is a member.

The COVID-19 pandemic created an immediate financial problem for many, many Kenyans who acutely lost most or all their income, including many parents in the school. In May 2019 AFAS Foundation started supporting many students with a bursary to enable them to continue learning during this difficult period. More about that in the part on Wanawa Foundation below.





In addition to provide financial support for students, CHPF has recently established two more revolving funds.



Several staff in North Coast MTC want to go for further studies but directly paying from their salaries is not easy. There are always support requests from relatives and friends for money to buy food, pay school fees or hospital bills, to set up a business, etcetera. Therefore, salaries always get finished, the end of the month is always a difficult period, and people find it very difficult to save. To assist staff members to save money for further studies, a fund was established in 2019 into which staff on their request can deposit part of their salary. This can then be used by them or other members of the fund when they have to pay fees for further studies. They continue depositing until they

have refunded all what they have used. CHPF supported the fund to kick off early 2019 with some individual

donations as seed capital. This enabled one of our clinical medicine trainers, Paul Mole, to start with a BSc training in mental health in Malawi which he will complete in December. Since then, three more staff have gone for training in different institutions in Kenya, and several more are set to start in September.



Purchase and installation of the smart phones for use by students

The latest revolving fund has been initiated very recently, in May 2020, though the demand was there already for years. For many students it has been difficult to afford a smart phone or a laptop upon admission in the college. As we were already going digital more and more, we were looking for solutions. Now, with the COVID-19 pandemic and having been forced completely to go to e-learning, this problem became more pronounced. We have made a small start with a fund for smart phones and laptops with the help of two individual donations. Whereas many students, even those who did not have a smart phone themselves, managed to access the elearning platform and participate in online classes through phones of family members or neighbours, a few were totally unable and threatened to fall behind completely. We managed to purchase smart phones for eight of those students as well as one laptop for one other students who for her upgrading course really needed that. We are looking for and discussing on how we can access more seed capital or work through specific collaborations to ensure more students get help through this fund. Students are repaying the devices over the period of one year through their fees so thereafter other students can be assisted.

Supporting community health

Over the past one and half year, we have been very busy preparing the closer collaboration with the government in providing health services, which was made possible after an agreement on the same was signed in November 2018. The aim is to improve community health and primary healthcare in through PPP whereby strengths of all participating partners, the local government, the local clinic, the community, North Coast MTC, CHPF and any

other partners who are brought in are used to the maximum and reinforce one another. We will focus in the first two years of full implementation on the area around the college (Bomani-Junju-Mtomkuu) and are likely to expand thereafter. The coordinating centre for these activities is CHPF.

Under this collaboration, a baseline study was carried out among 1183 households in the community to get a detailed insight in the make-up of the population and core health related characteristics as well as the main concerns of the community as far as their health and healthcare are concerned.



In the second half of 2019, we managed to install and equip two Health Information Points (HIPs) in two of the surrounding villages, paid by several donors to CHPF, managed by CHPF, and with service provision every weekday afternoon by staff and students from North Coast MTC. Villages can attend the HIPs to receive health education, advice, check-ups, and first aid. They are mainly focused on preventive care but have a referral system to the clinic as soon as more than very basic curative care is required. To achieve this, North Coast MTC

made several changes in the curriculum and it is also a core part of the NUFFIC project to integrate these community based education and services more and better in the learning.

Other than focusing on the HIPs, we also actively try to support the existing facility to improve the services. One project that we have worked on since late 2018, is to establish a maternity at the clinic so



The health information point in Kolewa village

that women can deliver closer home. This is really a multi-partner effort and it has taken time but we hope that by September we will be on with the required renovations of the maternity wing. Already, through support from the Netherlands Albert Schweitzer Fund we managed to renovate the toilets and purchase medical equipment for the maternity. The Rotary Club of Mtwapa is leading the fundraising and implementation of the renovation of the building and further equipment of the facility. Through an individual donation under Wanawa Foundation we also managed to assist the clinic with a much needed computer. In the course of 2020 and 2021 we hope to also be able to provide more specialized healthcare services from the college premises.

The first partner who has firmly supported some of the activities within this program is a British charity called *Mama na Mtoto*. With their assistance, we were able to provide training to the village health volunteers in the area on various aspects of care during pregnancy and they participate in the activities at the health information points as well as referring pregnant women and young children when required. Through this sub-program we have been able to increase the reach of antenatal care and the uptake of immunizations. During this period of COVID-19 we have also assisted women to get transport if delivery starts at night so that they can go to a facility to deliver rather than delivering at home. This was necessary as Kenya has been under curfew for the last 2 ½ months. We are now starting to focus on family planning access as well.

We are very glad that we were supported by Wanawa Foundation to kick-off this program and that we received



additional support last month from Diorapthe Foundation for the same. Many activities are now going on and in addition to the already planned interventions, quite a number of activities are now focused on combatting COVID-19, like information provision in the community, provision of face-masks, enhancing sanitation etcetera. Several requests are in the pipeline to enable us to run the program for two years and see what it can enable us to achieve. Other than funding, we are also in advanced planning stage with German Doctors, a German non-governmental organization, to support with manpower and possible other support – they already assisted with funding for the removal of the asbestos sheets as part of the renovation of the maternity.





Other projects

Other than the above two main programmes that we focused on in 2019 and the beginning of 2020, CHPF also supported North Coast MTC with two other infrastructure projects.

The college is constructing a gym which will function both as an exercise place for staff and students as well as a practical lab for physiology related topics. To make students experience physiology practically - for example "When you do exercise for five minutes – what effect does it have on your blood pressure and your heart rate?" The college is contributing a larger part of the construction itself but requested some support to be able to finish the first part of the building. The Hanze University Foundation provided a contribution to assist.

Secondly, with a donation from *Stichting Ontwikkelingssamenwerking De Ronde Venen*, we were able to assist the college to increase outside learning spaces for group work. Such seating arrangements are likely to become even more important in the near future when face-to-face learning resumes but likely only in smaller groups.



4. Wanawa Foundation

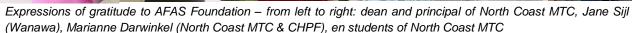
AFAS Foundation COVID-19 Rescue Fund

The Wanawa Foundation has been working with CHPF and North Coast MTC for the past eight years. In February this year, Wanawa Foundation was looking for new partners for CHPF. When we reviewed the site of the AFAS foundation, we recognized the passion to inspire others and the urge to find innovative solutions that we have known for years from CHPF and North Coast MTC and thought they could make a good match.

However, as said before; "Nothing lasts but change". In March, we ended up in a pandemic. The indirect impact of this pandemic is mainly seen in education, the economy, but also in general health care. For North Coast MTC, this meant that they immediately had to switch to online teaching. In addition, they have

worked hard to save costs, but many monthly costs continue such as, telephone costs, Internet, also continued. Moreover, it became very difficult for many students to continue paying school fees due to the economic consequences of the pandemic. Many parents lost their jobs, sales markets collapsed, and many small businesses no longer generated income. School fees could be reduced this term due to cost savings, but without income there were still many problems for students.

The Wanawa foundation and CHPF decided to send the AFAS foundation a special proposal, a request to set up an AFAS Covid 19 rescue fund for the students. In one weekend we made the best use of our online ties between Kenya and the Netherlands. Videos, pictures, and information were shared from the smallest villages in Kenya, which has been combined in the Netherlands into a beautifully coherent story in which we have explained our request. AFAS Foundation responded to our request within a few days and we were able to start with the rescue fund. The fund issues scholarships to students to get through this difficult period, allowing them to continue their studies and North Coast MTC can continue to teach and pay monthly fees through scholarship income. Everyone's quick action and the fantastic response from the AFAS made this possible.



Community Health Care

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In these hectic times, we find many challenges in the field of health care. First of all because care is needed for patients affected by the Covid 19 pandemic worldwide, but also because of the preventive and informative care required by this outbreak. Another side effect is that regular care is under pressure due to the shift in priorities. This is also reflected in Bomani / Junju / Mtomkuu, the large rural community where North Coast MTC is located. CHPF aims to provide comprehensive (preventive) care to all residents, approximately 15,000 people.

The idea is to create a care model, which can be used in many other rural areas. We want to test this model in Bomani by helping to develop the local dispensary into a health centre and establish associated Health Information Points - HIPs (in line with the government concept of Community Units). To this aim, the existing clinic has to be strengthened and expanded to include maternity care, outpatient care and short-term admission possibilities. A HIP is a health post which provides basic care in the various villages within the municipality and can possibly refer you to the health centre. In addition, immediate preventive care and information can be given, for example about a pandemic. As a result, the HIPs form a first point of contact for basic care questions,







preventive care education and for health education to the environment. The medical centre and affiliated HIPs form a place where healthcare organizations, medical training organizations, government and development projects work together to find solutions to healthcare challenges. This is a care model, which can significantly improve preventive and curative care in rural areas of Kenya and can save costs. Different parties are working on setting up, financing and streamlining this model. This is needed to make care in rural areas more accessible, but also affordable. Over the next two years, this model will serve, as a role model. North Coast MTC and CHPF, will be able to collect data to demonstrate effectiveness and improve the model where necessary. Wanawa Foundation is trying to find suitable partners to support the establishment and evaluation of this system.

5. Looking ahead

As might be clear from the above, we are working hard and a lot of innovations and improvements are being embarked on to make healthcare and healthcare training better. The year was full of training and travelling plans and the economy in Kenya was getting better, making it easier for parents to support their children to a brighter future. As we are all aware, many plans, situations, and outlooks were changed due to COVID-19 and at least equally so by the measures taken to limit its spread. Currently, the situation in Kenya is very difficult. Many students will be more dependent than ever on support through studies loans and bursaries to continue learning and without them paying, the college cannot survive. Definitely, therefore, much of our focus for North Coast MTC for the remainder of this year will be on generating that support for students.

Secondly, the pandemic has caused a lot of upheaval in the already weak healthcare system. We are already doing more work in the community and will expand that in the coming year, to assist the government in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable – in general, the poor in the rural areas.

Having said that, we are all human beings and many of us are very resilient and creative, and will in one way or another also overcome this crisis. For once, this is a shared crisis and we in addition to thanking all our friends, relations, and supporters, we hope that you are taking good care of yourselves and your loved ones and that you stay safe!

If you want to support our work – that is great! Donations are very necessary and can be sent as follows: If you are based in Kenya directly to Community Health Promotion Fund Bank: Commercial Bank of Africa

Branch: Nyali

Account: 7676210018 (Kenyan Shilling)

Name: Community Health Promotion Fund

Donations from the Netherlands can be made with tax exemption through our Dutch ANBI-approved partner, the Wanawa Foundation: account number: NL24 RABO 011 04 55 657 quoting CHPF.

Donations in EUROS from abroad to Kenya:

Bank: Commercial Bank of Africa

Bank address: Upper Hill, Commercial Bank Building, Mara & Ragati Roads - PO Box 30437 – 00100 Nairobi, Kenya SWIFT Code/BIC: **CBAFKENX**

Account: 7676210023

Name: Community Health Promotion Fund

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