



Career Focus - PUBLIC HEALTH

Dear Alumni, TUCSIN students & Staff

Welcome back from the holidays! I trust that you all had a well rested holiday and ready for the big challenges awaiting for you this term. In this months edition we focus on Public Health. I also would like to share a very inspirational story from one of our current DAAD grantees, Pancho Mulongeni a student at the Univ of Cape Town doing his Masters in Public Health– Epidemiology. Thank you Pancho for this inspirational contribution!

- Martina

What is PUBLIC HEALTH?

Public Health is your health. Most people don't understand what Public health is or how it impacts our daily life. Public health works to improve the conditions around us and promote healthy behavior. Public health battles range from contagious diseases to pushing for healthier lifestyles , from reducing incidence of preventable diseases to minimizing the consequences of catastrophic events , from providing the basics of sanitation to safe food and water.

Health inspectors' work includes the supervision and safeguarding of environmental sanitation, food, water supplies, housing conditions and the prevention of disease.

It is their duty to: ensure a safe water, milk and food supplies; inspect establishments where food, drugs and cosmetics are made, handled, stored, sold or conveyed; investigate the structural and sanitary conditions of premises, personal cleanliness and handling of products; inspect non-food business premises and private premises, and carry out slum clearance and pest control.

They take samples of water, milk, food and other substances regularly and run tests, keep records, submit reports, attend to correspondence and licence applications, peruse building plans, compile statements for prosecutions, attend meetings and investigate complaints.

State health inspectors initiate educational programmes. They also put into operation immunization services, health campaigns and tuberculosis control, as well as advise local authorities on community health.

Health inspectors may on a rotation basis, specialize in one particular area, such as food control, slum clearance, pest control, institutions or milk control, etc.

Health inspectors work in many different settings. They travel from one establishment to another for inspection purposes but usually have their own offices where reports are prepared.

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REQUIREMENTS & TRAINING

Satisfying Aspects

- the variety of the work
- working with people
- travelling
- performing a useful service
- being supplied with a motorcar or being reimbursed for travelling

Demanding aspects

- the large amount of administrative work
- working with unreasonable people who must be forced by law to change harmful practices
- the unpleasant odours in some of the plants they visit
- a lot of travelling

Requirements

- keen interest in the general health of the population
- concerned about the food for human consumption
- want to improve the living conditions of the community
- enjoy working with people
- able to accept responsibility
- honest and objective
- good judgment and the ability to organize
- sound knowledge of health care systems

School Subjects

Namibia National Senior Certificate (Grade 12) for a diploma course

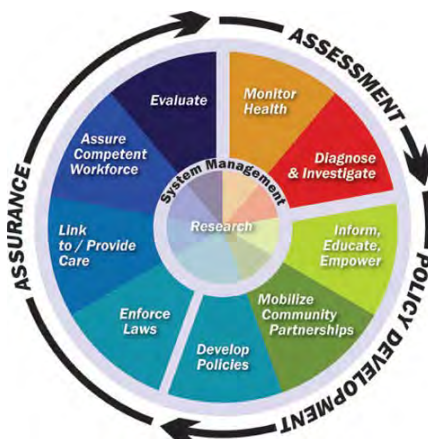
Recommended Subjects: Mathematics, Natural Science, Life Sciences, Geography

Training

Public Health courses are offered by Cape Peninsula Univ of Technology, Wits, UL, UP and UCT.

Employer

- municipalities
- Min of National Health and Population Development
- Namibian Defense Force
- mines
- Ministry of Agriculture



Monitor health



Enforce laws



Diagnose and investigate



Link to and provide care



Inform, educate and empower



Assure a competent workforce



Mobilize community partnerships



Evaluate



Develop policies



Research

TUCSIN ALUMNI CONTRIBUTION

Often times I find myself faced with an almost insurmountable academic task. This past week in lecture, there was a competition to win a book on how to write 'Systematic Reviews'. Forgetting what 'Systematic Reviews' are for a moment, let's just focus on the scenario: you are at the end of the lecture and the professor announces "Competition Time! So I have one of this books to give away from the Cochrane Library of South Africa. All you have to do is guess where this picture was taken." I thought there would be no possible way I would guess where the photo of my professor in Epidemiology's brother in law was taken. A man standing on summer shorts in front of a very large tree. " But I did actually guess it and she gave me the book.

How did I manage that? I just let myself try, one guess at a time. Like the rest of my classmates, I started by shouting out the continent – "Africa, Asia, North America, Australia" – came the guesses and it seemed we were nowhere close. Then came more guesses "Britain!" I said and then later "Germany! (I am funded by the German government after all, but that does not mean the photo was taken there – the man is wearing shorts, it's never good enough weather in Britain [or Germany] for someone to dress like that – was what the professor said of our feeble attempts). I then realized that I can keep on trying, but let me actually use the clues at my disposal.

It then fell into place. I began to listen to what other classmates say – 'Europe' was correct for the continent and then 'Greece'.

"Now what do you know about medicine and Greece" hinted our professor

"The Hippocratic Oath?" I blurted out, thinking aloud



"Yes, yes, you are very close"

One of my classmates behind me, Amy, muttered something about the tree of Hippocrates...

"You are almost there and I think I just have to give it to you because you are so close..."

"The Tree of Hippocrates!"

"Yes you are right, here you go".

I had just won, but because I had help from Amy, I immediately told the professor what I had heard behind me. "Well I will ask the Cochrane Library if we can get another one, because often there are two people who guess and it is difficult to give it to just one".

And yet she chose me as the winner. I wonder if it had anything to do with the fact I shouted it out aloud or because I thoroughly participated in that lecture about how to do Systematic Reviews, I am the one who likes to give an answer when a silence is all one hears after the professor asks "So who can then give me an interpretation of the forest plot?"

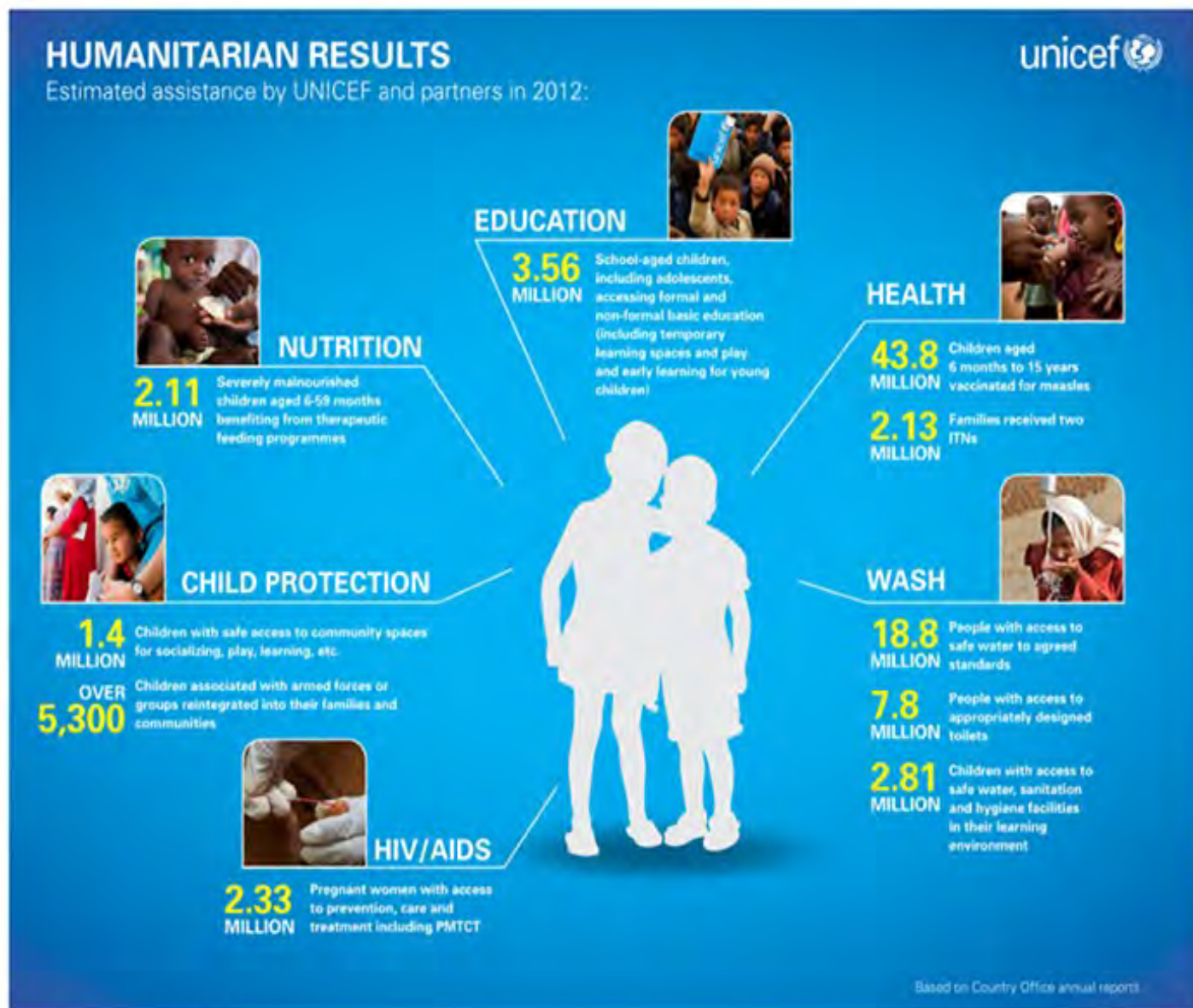
Whatever it may be, I did not achieve this alone. I agreed that I would lend Amy the book over the holidays. In any case, we will continue working together throughout the semester on several of our classes.

So this is my story, by just giving it a try and working with your classmates, the insurmountable becomes possible.

Pancho Mulongeni (right) is a 2014 recipient of a DAAD scholarship doing his Masters in Public Health — Epidemiology at the University of Cape Town.



Food for thought:



02 | UNICEF Humanitarian Action Study 2012

“Public health is all around us: the water we drink, the immunizations we receive, and the environment in which we live in.”

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