

Insights

Issue No. 20

Building Health Sector Capacities in Tanzania – the Potential of Pharmaceutical Training and the Role of the Stakeholders in Safeguarding the Human Right to Health

Exposure and Dialogue Programme in Moshi & Mwanza
Tanzania, 31 Jan - 06 Feb 2016

Cooperation partner: GKKE- Joint Conference Church and Development

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Editorial



Nineteen (19) representatives of the pharmaceutical industry, from international development cooperation, health organizations, science and the Church took part in the Exposure and Dialogue Programme (EDP) at two locations of pharmaceutical training in Tanzania. Amongst

them were three representatives from Tanzania and Kenya. Initiated by the Pharmacy Dialogue of the Joint Conference Church and Development (GKKE) and carried out together with CUHAS-Bugando (Mwanza) and Saint Luke Foundation/ Kilimanjaro School of Pharmacy (Moshi) as well as selected

host students, this EDP had many facets. Thanks to the support of the Pharmacy Council and Registrar Elizabeth Shekalaghe who took over the auspices of this project, also representatives of the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare, Gender and Children participated in the closing dialogue workshop.

The programme portrayed a high level of complexity in view of the starting points and the institutional interests of the participating stakeholders in their cooperation in the Tanzanian health sector. It was the first EDP dealing with vocational training in the health system in a sub-Saharan African country. However, people of rather different cultural and professional backgrounds developed common perspectives and promoted genuine understanding blazing a trail for extending and intensifying pharmaceutical training – also in their dialogue with representatives of State authorities.

We met young men and women being at the beginning of their professional career in a key area of social development. Astonishing- their precisely expressed motivation and their enthusiasm for their work during a time of exam preparations, which often did not end until it was the middle of the night. Moving- the insights into a huge range of familiar backgrounds and personal competences, showing committed families and strong family bonds in many cases. Irritating- the fact that to the vast majority of the students of the new module-based course ('dispenser- pharmaceutical assistant/ technician') this practical pharmaceutical training is just a bridge to attain the striven academic level of pharmaceutical professionalism. Their motives are dreams of a higher income and hope for a better social reputation in a healthcare profession acknowledged ubiquitously. Still, those young (prospective) experts would be urgently needed in that particular area of pharmacy which is both technical and trade-related.

As we mourn for our friend and adviser Karl-Heinz Hein-Rothenbücher who passed away on 19 July 2016, we remember his professional enthusiasm and high level of personal engagement with the people working in health. He did not only actively support this particular programme as he played a pivotal role in making it successful. We lost a friend and promoter of this EDP-kind of "learning from irritations". May his spirit and living example guide us in our work towards integral human development!

Yours faithfully,

EDP office team (Bonn/Germany)

Making the best out of it – living as a student in Mwanza



My host is 23 years old and a lively, cheerful and self-confident young woman with an altogether very likeable personality. We quickly found a good arrangement for staying together during these days of exposure – not least thanks to her excellent organizational skills and discipline. She also radiates real love of life, trusting in God to help her to manage her daily trials. Consequently she leads a joyful life and walks her way faithfully. I enjoyed the time we spent together very much and was particularly impressed, by her affectionate hospitality and the uncomplicated way, in which we got along.

After only a couple of days I felt like I had known her for ages.

The living condition in the hostel on the campus are difficult when seen with western standards but in total highly advantageous for the young people studying there, because this way they save the long and time consuming commuting from the city to the university. And many young people like her are used to living apart from their family as a result of the boarding school system. The fee for renting a room in the hostel is about 209.000 Tanzanian Shilling per year and person and thus affordable only for middle class families.

On the campus there are numerous hostels for students. There are separated floors for men and women. In our hostel 20 to 30 women lived together on one floor, two each sharing a very small bed room. There is no possibility to cook in the hostel, but on the campus there are many food courts serving simple breakfast, lunch and dinner. You can also find small shops catering to daily needs, hair dressers and shops where to buy SIM Cards. There are special tariffs for students and the price for food is quite low. Nevertheless the students have to economize in order to conserve their small budget.

From my perspective the hostels are in dire need of renovation. There is not even light on some of the floors. Only after laptops and mobile phones had been stolen out of the rooms at night the administration began installing lights on some floors.

On our floor, there were three washbasins of which only one was working. There was no running water in the showers. Water was taken from the toilets and carried to the rooms in buckets. There was no light in the bathroom and the doors could not be locked but the women did not complain about this situation. I found the situation hard to accept. The students are, after all, paying rent for their rooms and should therefore be entitled to at least the basic necessities such as sanitation, light and locks on doors for their safety.

Elisabeth Schlünder, KfW Bankengruppe

Teaching exposure



Learning a pharmaceutical profession is different compared to learn for an A-level exam at school. The school lays the foundation. Vocational training should enable the student to transfer theory into practice. Vice versa the training should be very close to the work reality. I was exposed to a training which was to a major extent an ex cathedra teaching. Theoretical education is emphasized, rather than a competence training. Students are taught with heavily text loaded PowerPoint slides. The “presentations” replace the missing textbooks for the students. Privileged students may use their own notebook to manage the slides as the notes. If their budget allows a credit for the dongle literature access through internet resources add open source information for learning. Yet most of the students copy content from the slides, learn and repeat the theoretical content. Pharmaceutical textbooks are missing.

The school employed teachers are well-trained. The external teachers didn't show up during the 3 days period of exposure. The practical experience from their day to day business in the hospital or at the district level could be the essence to the transfer of theoretical knowledge into practical experience and share this with the students.

There is a laboratory for practical exercises in compounding of different pharmaceutical dosage forms, e.g. solution, suspension, emulsion, ointment or cream. Another building allows to manufacture tablets up to a maximum of 50 kg batch size. A quality laboratory allows to perform the most important analytical methods in quality control of pharmaceutical dosage forms. All students are exposed to the minilab, a rather simple to use but very well designed tool which allows to check up to 80 different medicines on quality, e.g. substandard or counterfeit medicine. The availability of these labs is exceptional for poor countries. I am sure, that the majority of pharmaceutical technologists or pharmaceutical assistants in many African countries will not be able to utilise comparable laboratories.

Being the only pharmacists among the exposure visitors my partnering student used me as a source to clarify terminology and content of the current subjects he studied. A group from the second year asked me to follow the procedure of preparing a shampoo and commenting on their practical

performance as there was no teacher designated for their exercise. Again practice needs to meet theory or a student wants to understand by utilizing theoretical knowledge in day to day work.

*Dr. Andreas Wiegand
German Pharmacists' Aid*

Post Exposure Blues or A Return to Normality?



Immediate aftermath: A view from Dar

After immersing myself into students' lives and their pharmaceutical training in Mwanza, it was time to travel back to Dar es Salaam to exchange with Government and other health sector stakeholders. Now, during the concluding Dialogue Workshop, I am back into official mode, standing in front of a flipchart, taking notes at a workshop subgroup meeting. An intense discussion ensues, the details of which I won't pretend to be able to pin down in fine print, being no specialist on the slings and

arrows of Tanzanian pharmaceutical training and its national health sector policy. What I am learning overall, though, strikes me as eerily familiar with debates in Germany, in particular with regard to what I would call the process and personal level of politics.

Let me explain: Whatever the merit of an argument, we tend to struggle to leave the intellectual safety of our well-shaped personal and professional preferences, instead of opening up to truly 'new and unconventional' ideas. Because, apodictically we state: „That's the way it is!“ That's so much easier, less stressful, isn't? All the more trouble, then, if somebody – say, a young doctor in such a subgroup – suddenly dares to pose tough questions to a senior decision-maker, challenges long-standing assumptions, exhibits courage, creativity and compassion.

As time goes by: A view from Bonn

It's been some time now since those days in Tanzania: I am back to my ordinary professional routine! Returning to my office, I found scores of unanswered E-Mails, saw funny pictures from Carnival, and showed my own pictures and videos to family, friends and colleagues. In other words, a return to normality, day after day, week after week. 'Had an interesting, impressive experience in this Exposure', I hear myself saying, 'well received, well organized, worth repeating'. But then, this huge caveat's creeping into my head: That routine doesn't quite feel as routine any more. Indeed, it no longer is. In particular, there are these moments still lingering in my mind when the Tanzanian students began asserting themselves more forcefully, breaking free from their superiors, directing tough questions at them, articulating their own interests. These were moments of bewilderment for their teachers, administrators, officials, visible in their faces, audible in their gasps; while for us, the German Ex-posed, these were moments of overwhelming joy, mixed with admiration for the courage of those young people who were speaking up.

A Personal Postscript

My host student and many of his fellow students who I got to know during those Mwanza days remain determined, energetic and stubbornly optimistic about the future. They truly hope for the better, to quote a memorable phrase. They are exemplary of what investing in people to improve not just their future, but the future of their country really means.

*André Budick,
BMZ – Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development*

Insights relevant to Training and Education Policies in the Tanzanian Health Sector



Employability and job perspectives of pharmaceutical technicians/assistants are paramount in making the pharmaceutical sector successful. The Tanzanian Government as the biggest beneficiary should play the lead role here. The Government should absorb graduates into employment as they have been doing to other healthcare providers (doctors/pharmacists). Incentives for technicians to work in rural areas should be put in place to encourage this men and women to serve the rural people who really need their services. Upon graduation The

Pharmacy Council of Tanzania needs to register and accredit the graduates as soon as possible to avoid time wasting when students cannot earn a living as a pharmaceutical technologist.

Public-private partnerships that build health sector capacities are required: Well, but how to move forward? The Government is to harmonize regulation and align with private sector in training and pharmaceutical healthcare providers. Clearly there is a need to have more institutions train industrial pharmaceutical staff, only the Kilimanjaro School of Pharmacy has the facility in the whole of Tanzania. The Government is to offer students' loan facilities for diploma and certificate level, as they have been doing for graduate students. The Pharmacy Council should lobby the Ministries of Education and of Finance as well as the Parliament to see how this can be achieved. Both private and public training institutions should also get involved in lobbying the above bodies. Tanzania has only eight (8) colleges for pharmaceutical training which is not adequate in view of the needs of the country. The government is to identify and establish centers of excellence in pharmaceutical training in different parts of Tanzania. The Government is to play a leading role in policy formulation, training, employment in the pharmaceutical health sector as part of the 'Access-to-Medicine Programme'. The role of dispensers needs to be addressed from a policy level. Their services are needed but the Pharmacy Council wants to phase them out and those leaving at this stage of their training are not being accredited. This should be re-considered!

*George Kuria,
Boehringer Ingelheim / Kenya*

Students' Capacities and Personal Focus – Insights won from an unusual perspective



My key experience was the sharp contrast between the consecutive times of prayers and lessons at the Kilimanjaro School of Pharmacy. During the Morning Prayer we saw students who were quite able to relate such abstract terms, concepts or principles from letters of Saint Paul as love (upendo), blessing (baraka) or 'the body and its members' to their daily tasks. They gave very concrete examples of what they mean in accepting diversity, appreciating successful work, cooperating and being fair to each other. This was true "ownership" of the bible and the spreading of its message, of improving one's own performance. It was learning for life.

When the lessons started this situation was immediately reversed. The question was no longer what equally abstract moral terms like objectivity, confidentiality, privacy or misconduct meant in daily life and work, but who could reproduce the definitions given before. Even in the small groups formed for discussion the students had difficulties in relating these concepts to future tasks or practical situations. It was learning for the exam, not for life,

fulfilling requirements instead of acquiring and owning analytical skills and personal or professional attitudes.

Is this just a question of the didactic method as one might be inclined to think? The contrast seems to indicate a deeper difference that consists in different degrees of identification with foreign imports. The Holy Scripture has become an integral part of African life worlds. It is a source of consolation and motivation, and of feeling secure in the many uncertainties of life. School and studies are different from such identification, a well-known problem in all educational systems. Yet, the number of students who understand all or most parts of their lessons as a burden laid on them from the outside and not as a chance for personal and professional growth might differ enormously.

One factor could be fees which were a permanent issue in the talks with and among students. Paying for education and training may increase motivation for good performance in exams and for profiting from lessons. It does not, however, support a feeling that society expects something from those for whose education it pays – like God's love or a congregation's care for its members might cause a feeling of responsibility.

This interpretation might be exaggerated at some points. The question remains: How can professional education become a truly personal concern; and not just an external requirement? This is a common challenge especially in societies where the modern state generates rather ambivalent experience to most citizens.

Walter Bruchhausen
Universities of Aachen, Bonn and Cologne

EDP – Development has got a face

Exposure and Dialogue Programmes are offers for further training and dialogue to promote sustainable and responsible acting carried out in developing and newly industrialized countries. They enable management staff and decision-makers from field of politics, business, church and civil society to have intense encounters and dialogues with people living in poverty.

Imprint

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