

REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

In Memoriam Zohair Nooman: 1932–2001

It is with great sadness that The Network has lost one of its founding members, whom many of you may have known quite well as an educational reformer, leader of change and improvement in world health and as a human being with the finest attributes.

I have known “Dr Zohair” since 1978 when he and his lifelong partner, Professor Esmat Ezzat, convinced me to join them on their missionary project of establishing the Suez Canal Medical School with its innovative educational programme and impact on medical education in Egypt, Arab countries and many African countries. I was close to them physically (living in their home at that time in Cairo) and sharing with them the vision and dream which became a reality.

He was a man of principles, determination and a workaholic. He had all the characteristics needed for founding a new medical school with a new curriculum, at that time “Problem-based Learning”, which was attacked by many older universities. He managed to attract, with his convincing and logical approach, a critical mass of faculty and established the medical school.

He was a caring brother and father to the faculty and students. As a Secretary of The Network his effort to widen its scope and focus its activities on linking education with health care and the impact on community development and health will always be remembered. We are now, in this conference, witnessing what he was preaching.

Dear friends, on your behalf, I will convey to Esmat your feelings, emotions, support and great sorrow, sadness and personal loss felt by each one of you. God bless his soul.

Hossam Hamdy
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Bahrain

The Network Meetings in Londrina, Brazil

Londrina set a high standard which we will try to emulate in coming annual conferences, beginning next year in Eldoret, Kenya.

The Annual Network Conference in Londrina, Brazil was a magical experience for many of us. Our host, and Executive Committee member, President Pedro Gordan of the University of Londrina opened our eyes to the struggles and successes of his relatively young university. The kindness, openness and generosity of the faculty, staff and students at Londrina were overwhelming.

The conference was also a watershed for The Network. The broadening of our organization's vision to include innovations in health services and evidence-based research was evident in the plenary sessions and the high quality of the poster sessions. In fact, the information on most of the posters was of such a high quality that we will try to incorporate some of that information into our new website.

The Network's secretariat and full membership also opened their arms to partnering with like-minded organizations. WHO's Toward Unity for Health initiative, represented at the conference by Dr. Charles Boelen and Dr. Paul Grand 'Maison, requested that The Network consider serving as a home base for their organization. This led to further discussions and proposals to integrate newsletters, projects, conferences and membership. The World Federation of Family Doctors (WONCA) sent its president elect, Dr. Michael Boland, to the conference and plans for linking websites and complementing each others' strengths were proposed.

There was a growing presence of multiprofessionalism and informal meetings were held between like-minded Network participants. A group of representatives from schools oriented toward rural and indigenous peoples' health (such as the University of British Columbia, Gezira University, James Cook University, University of New South Wales, the Federal University of the Amazon, University of the West Indies and the University of New Mexico) called a meeting at the conference and will link and share strategies by a listserv.

Finally, the important site visits arranged by our Londrina hosts led to much discussion. Community groups we visited invariably link health status and economic development. Many of us reflected on how we can adapt these approaches into our home setting. At one site, community groups were even gaining skills on the internet to connect and share strategies with other community groups in Brazil.

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Sicily Meeting: 27–29 May 2002—TUFH and The Network

Dr. Pina Frazzica, Director General of the Centre for Training and Research in Public Health (CEFPAS) in Caltanissetta, Sicily, and her able staff hosted a meeting of some 40 members of the Executive Committee of The Network and Advisory Committee of Towards Unity for Health (TUFH). Dr. Salvatore Cuffaro, President of the Caltanissetta Region, served as Honorary President.

The meeting addressed the amalgamation of The Network and TUFH into a new organization: **The Network; TUFH**.

This new organization is being conceptualized with aims and goals to (1) promote the development of socially responsive health systems, (2) reorient health professions education to fit the priority health needs of communities, and (3) promote research that supports these objectives.

In moving towards these aims and goals the new organization will endeavor to adhere to the philosophy that embraces the role of multiple stakeholders in addressing these issues. These include: policy-makers, health managers, professional associations, academic institutions, and communities.

The Sicily meeting provided a congenial environment in which to discuss these issues, work through transitional details, further define and develop the role of multiple task forces that will address education, programmatic development, funding, etc., and begin to implement strategies for success.

Buz Salafsky
University of
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The Fifth World Conference on Rural Health of the World Federation of Family Doctors (WONCA)

The Conference took place in Melbourne, Australia, April 30 – May 3, 2002. It brought together many groups of rural family doctors, professional organizations, academicians and students all oriented toward rural health.

The conference was lively and featured very practical symposia, scientific papers, posters and exhibits on this important subject. Topics were diverse and ranged from strategies for attracting spouses, to rural communities, to the loneliness of children of rural doctors frequently on call, to the impact of rural doctors on rural economic development.

There were important ethical discussions. Delegates raised concerns about wealthy countries ‘poaching’ doctors, nurses and other health professionals from developing countries, thereby draining the latter’s vital national health resources to satisfy rural health needs in rural areas of industrialized countries. South Africa was a positive example of a country that has imposed a moratorium on such recruitment and the conference hoped to promulgate a more responsible policy worldwide.

Of particular interest to Network members was the emergence of diverse national, regional and international networks to address common problems. Carl Whiteside, Network member from the University of British Columbia, for example, created a network of Canadian medical schools oriented toward rural health. Others, including Flinders and James Cook in Australia, and schools in South Africa and the United States interested in rural health also discussed strengthening links through The Network. Many were pleased with plans for Toward Unity for Health merging with The Network.

A new peer reviewed journal, The International Electronic Journal of Rural and Remote Health (<http://rrh.deakin.edu.au>) would like to explore mutually beneficial links with scholarly output from Network members, including reproduction of abstracts from Education for Health. The Network is represented on their editorial board and at a board meeting we discussed how we might link with other international journals and organizations with overlapping missions. This electronic journal can serve as a vehicle for publishing peer reviewed abstracts and articles related to rural health and could also help disseminate relevant 'stories', 'strategies', 'deliverable materials', and contacts leading to innovations.

Perhaps the most remarkable and unique network presented was the National Rural Health Network (www.nrhn.org) developed by interdisciplinary teams of health professions students themselves. Their aim is to sustain interest in rural health careers and to recruit youth from rural communities into the health professions. Their successful strategy builds on the formation of rural health clubs and they have successfully bypassed the university-based training silos in which health professions students are trained in isolation from each other. In rural sites, students from different disciplines learn to work together for the better health of their outback communities. Few other countries have gone as far as Australia, and it would be profitable for the Student Network Organization and other student groups from different regions of the world to link with them.

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The sixth Annual Conference of Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH)

Community partnerships as a strategy for change in health and higher education have been gaining recognition and momentum in recent years. In the last five years alone, both public and private funding agencies, primarily in

the United States, have invested millions of dollars in community partnerships for such goals as increased access to higher education, greater civic engagement, and positive change in individual health behavior, especially among traditionally disadvantaged communities.

While these partnerships are achieving many worthy goals, they also pose challenges at the community level:

- How can we leverage the resources they provide and collaborate across partnerships to maximize the benefits to communities?
- How can we nurture and sustain partnerships over time?
- How can we assess and document the role that the partnership itself plays in bringing about change?
- Many community partnerships do not involve colleges or universities as partners, either explicitly or incidentally. How can we facilitate the linkage between community partnerships and academic institutions for mutual benefit?

CCPH's 6th annual conference, May 4–7, 2002 in Miami, Florida USA, focused on the PARTNERSHIP as the leverage point for change in communities and higher educational institutions. The conference drew more than 400 participants from 5 countries. Plenary presentations, workshops, posters, exhibits and site visits addressed such topics as service-learning, community-based participatory research, partnership governance, and partnership outcomes. During the opening session, Ron Richards, editor of The Network's journal, *Education for Health*, gave an overview of The Network and highlighted plans for The Network and CCPH to cosponsor an international conference on community-campus partnerships in 2004. Descriptions of conference sessions are available at <http://futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph/nationalconference.html>

During the conference, members of The Network executive committee and staff met with CCPH board members and staff to plan the 2004 conference and pursue other areas of collaboration.

The conference closing dinner included the announcement of the first annual Community-Campus Partnerships for Health award. The award was established to highlight the power and potential of partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions. The Morehouse School of Medicine-Southside Atlanta Partnership and the Partnership for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Health in Idaho were selected from an impressive pool of over 140 nominations. For more information on the 2002 CCPH Award recipients, please visit the CCPH website: <http://futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph/awards.html>

Mark your calendars now for CCPH's 7th annual conference, April 26–29, 2003 in San Diego, CA, USA. The call for conference proposals and the call for award nominations will be released in fall 2002. For more information, visit <http://futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph/nationalconference.html>.

To be added to CCPH's mailing list, send your contact information to ccphuw@u.washington.edu.

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