



**Hebrew University-Hadassah  
Braun School of Public Health & Community Medicine  
International MPH Alumni Newsletter**

**November 2013**



**Director's Message**

**In with the new...**

**Today, October 13<sup>th</sup> we officially began the academic year for the 2013-2014 IMPH class. This year we have 28 students from 19 countries - from Albania, Cameroon, Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Israel, Kenya, Nepal, Nevis, Nigeria, Palestinian Authority, the Philippines, Russia, South Sudan, Swaziland, Ukraine, Uganda, and the United States. Many professions, including Medicine, Nursing, Entomology, Medical Journalism, Biostatistics and Public Health are represented. We are thrilled to welcome our new "batch" of IMPH scholars and thank our current sponsors, the Pears Foundation, MASHAV, The British and American Friends of Hebrew University, TEVA, the Bonita Trust and the Rotary Foundation for their generous support. We look forward to a productive and rewarding year by all and for all.**

**As always, we urge our alumni to actively recruit potential candidates for next year's IMPH!**



**39th IMPH class members at brunch at Ora Paltiel's home**



## **The changing of the guard...**

**The 38th IMPH class graduated with the usual pomp and ceremony in the Botnar Auditorium of the Faculty of Medicine on Sept. 9, 2013. It was a beautiful day and an especially beautiful ceremony. We were greeted by Prof. Eran Leitersdorf, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Yuval Weiss, Director of the Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital, and an MPH graduate from our School, and Ambassador Mattanya Cohen, head of Training at MASHAV in Israel's Foreign Ministry. The colorful procession of our 28 graduates from 19 countries had everyone up on their feet. Our graduates also regaled us with a song (Imagine) and with a lively and "representative" dance medley called "Dances of the World".**



**Our keynote speaker was Prof. Eduardo Villamor from Colombia, an IMPH graduate from 1995-1996 and now a professor of Epidemiology at the University of Michigan. His topic was Epidemiologic Research as a Public Health Career and despite his modesty, he delivered a talk which was inspiring,, informative and motivational. We also enjoyed having Eduardo for the two days prior to the ceremony for various workshops and seminars. Thank you Eduardo!!!**

**We were treated to an upbeat and professional film about the School produced by our students Xenia Kubasova, Noa Raviv, Rene Galera and others and to farewell speeches by Rilwan Raji and Nse Merhav, the class reps. As usual, it was wonderful to have diplomats, faculty, and friends among us. Many of our donors and supporters in the Hebrew University External Relations Department were also in attendance. This year families came from the US, Russia, Nigeria, Philippines, the PA and others and we were thrilled to share in their joy and pride. The ceremony can be seen at**

**<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwOpIlelmhQ>. – in this version there is an audio problem – during Yehuda's message one hears Ora's talk and during the distribution of degrees there is no sound.**

**We will miss you, class of 2013!!! Prof. Neumark and I did our best to describe the true pride we had at watching this IMPH class complete their studies and return to their homes fully loaded with Public Health tools. The festive atmosphere continued outside at the reception and yearbooks were signed and annotated. Many of you are already in touch but we ask all of you to keep us informed of your whereabouts, your career moves and accomplishments and of**

course- your family and personal lives!

## **IMPH Alumni Academic Coordinator – Dr. Maureen Malowany**

Dear Alumni,

A new title – a new post – new friends! Although I met many of you last February, there are more of you out there I very much look forward to meeting – perhaps at the next alumni conference.

In the meantime, let me introduce myself. I came to Israel three years ago from Montréal, Canada and to the Braun School two years ago. As of this past summer, I wear the hat of Alumni Academic Coordinator. My academic life began as an anthropologist, then trained as an historian of medicine – of public health – of sub-Saharan Africa. My studies, teaching and research took me from McGill University in Montréal to the University of Oxford – while teaching there I undertook another degree at the London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. My love of public health has merged with history of medicine and brought me a growing interest in contemporary global health.

As Alumni Academic Coordinator, with the IMPH team, I will help frame the regional meetings to be held in East and West Africa in 2014, the mentorship program for alumni to include all regions where you live and work and, of course, listening to any suggestions you have to enrich the alumni network.

Presentations from the February conference are on the School's website. Do take a look at the amazing work your colleagues and friends have shared.

We plan to have a dedicated 'network' alumni staff person on the team soon to keep us all in touch with each other.

For the academic side, please let me know when you change jobs or areas of interest. Send me your publications – give me the opportunity to share your successes.

Wishing you all the best,

Maureen Malowany, PhD, MHIth Sc, MA

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### ***Biosketch***

***Benson Ulo (Kenya, 2002/03, [ulobenson@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ulobenson@yahoo.co.uk))***

***"Always starting with purpose and objectives"***

You are born to illiterate parents, struggle to go to school and are finally admitted to medical school to train as a medical doctor. Half way medical school is cut short due to circumstances beyond your control and you remain helpless with an unclear future, doing all sorts of odd jobs at construction sites where 99% of colleagues never made it beyond primary school, just to survive. Inside is a burning desire that you could still accomplish academically. Three years later you get a sponsor and get back to the university and study four years of public health. 11 months into one year mandatory internship you get a MASHAV scholarship for a one-year International Master of Public Health (IMPH) in Israel, in a class of 24 students from 15 different countries worldwide... I call this "*an opportunity of a lifetime*" and for the disciplined effort to complete it has led to

multiple rewards in my life.

Among my university colleagues with whom I was in medical school, I became the first to graduate with a masters' degree from a reputable institution. At international Medical Corps, my employer since 2004, the quality of the education at the Braun School of Public Health and Community Medicine has been more than demonstrated with pride. I became a key *think tank* in program development and have since designed and implemented HIV/AIDS and TB programs that provide employment to hundreds of individuals and thousands of people benefitting from HIV and TB prevention, care and treatment services in hard to reach areas throughout the country. The current CDC funded five years prisons HIV/AIDS and TB program grant, of which I am the director, has greatly improved health in prisons - from about 40% of deaths due to TB to no reported TB deaths per year. The knowledge and skills I acquired on how to do things (*always starting with Purpose and Objectives*) have been cascaded to everyone who has worked with me closely. 90% of staff I have ever supervised remain the cream of programming in organizations they work for. My work has been shared at international conferences and I believe has and continues to inform program design in many other countries.

The IMPH simply puts keen converts and dedicated individuals into think tanks that are adaptable to all situations to shape up public health practice worldwide.

### Highlighting IMPH Alumni

**Dr. Vineet Srivastava (India, 2012/13, [vineet.srivastava@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:vineet.srivastava@mail.huji.ac.il) )**

Since my childhood days I have held a passion for science. It was during my secondary schooling that medicine in particular interested me. Stationed at various cities with my father, an army officer, I experienced poor access of health care services. The thought of dedicating my life to improving the lives of others was very appealing to me.

I come from Uttar Pradesh, one of the largest states in India with a population of 200 million, 16.5% of India's population; it is the world's fifth most populous state, big enough to be a country in its own right but is also plagued by the worst health indicators, an IMR and MMR of 63 (SRS-2009) and 359 (SRS 2007-09) against 50 and 212 for India, respectively.

Following my passion, I completed my Bachelors of Medicine and Bachelors of Surgery (MBBS) in Kanpur, India. As part of my curriculum in Social and Preventive Medicine, I was aghast to realize that many mothers and children were still dying due to preventable reasons and lack of basic health care in India and around the globe. To be able to contribute effectively toward the cause I undertook an MBA in Health Care Management.

While working with the INGO, Jhpiego, I came into contact with a colleague, Dr. Vivek Yadav, a graduate of the Braun School, working as National Program Manager using Public Health skills. Through him I came to know that Hebrew University had one of the best Public Health schools globally. He always talked about the public health skills and tools he learnt there and most importantly their practical application. This motivated me to apply for the course and I was lucky

enough to be offered the opportunity due to generous support from the Bonita Trust Foundation.

I am a public health professional with more than ten years of indepth experience in implementation of national- and state-level public health programs. I have worked in areas of project management; designing community-based health programs; monitoring, research and evaluation; capacity building and documentation. I am a strong advocate for safe motherhood, reproductive health, and family planning programs, with experience of managing diverse funds, budgeting, and facilitating multi-sectoral stakeholder forums. I am a medical graduate and hold an MBA in Health Care Management. Before joining the IMPH course, I was working as National Program Manager at Jhpiego India, an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University. Prior to joining Jhpiego, I had been associated with some of the most reputable national and international public health organizations, namely PATH, UNICEF, and WHO.

When I joined the IMPH course in October 12 and during the first day I was excited to meet my classmates from more than 19 different countries with diverse experience and expertise. This made the class actually a global forum of people sharing and bringing in the problems, experience and locally applied solutions. In addition, living together enhanced this shared learning.

When I was introduced to the course content we were to undergo, the challenge made me excited on the one hand as it contained all the critical areas of Global Public Health, and on the other hand, I felt tense as it appeared very intensive. Later on I realized that the curriculum was so well organized in such a systematic flow that it never caused too much stress and, with effort, was manageable. I personally appreciate the efforts put in by the Director and Faculty of the Braun School of Public Health who were very supportive and always accessible and who provided a focus on each individual, both strengths and weaknesses, to develop a strong foundation.

Under expert professional guidance, the IMPH course has really helped me in providing the formal insight, skills and knowledge of public health and its practical applications. Other than the basic public health courses, I found most exciting their practical application through courses such as Communicable Diseases and Community Oriented Primary Care (COPC) which equip students to develop a locally-adapted, well-suited public health program.

The course also provided an opportunity to participate in various conferences including the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Health Policy and Alumni meeting. It was a learning experience to interact with the large extended family of IMPH and to know the contribution they were making to the social cause. I felt proud to be part of the family.

The course also integrated components for the exposure to the region, its languages, diverse cultures, religions and histories including visits to various historical places of importance. Honestly, my opinion about Israel changed as I adored the way of living of Judaism, their respect for every religion and the idea of "Kupat Holim" which I interpret as Global Family and harmony.

I hope to continue my work to contribute towards the mission to strengthen the

public health systems in India or other developing countries to the desired level, in order to help achieve health for all and to prevent the needless deaths of mothers and children.

While I was still doing my IMPH course, in March 2013, I was contacted by one of the reputed US based international organisations, "Global Health Strategies", regarding a position of Project Director, based out of India, to lead their project on School Health focussing on Adolescent Health, one of the most neglected areas in India. They had come to know through a previous colleague that I was pursuing my IMPH course at Hebrew University and they felt that with the knowledge, skills and tools gained I could be one of the best candidates for the said position. After a series of discussions and formal interviews I was finally selected for the position.

However, they were a bit sceptical that as my course was to end late in September, 2013, they could not wait until that time. I shared the given opportunity with the Program Director and I was well guided and supported so that I could complete my course before schedule (with some extra effort) by July 2013.

This was like a dream come true to me. This position would also help me to make more contributions towards my goal of global social responsibility in an effective and efficient way, which I have always dreamed. This could never have happened without the IMPH course.

I am immensely grateful to the Bonita Trust Foundation and the Hebrew University for their scholarship, which has made a very significant contribution to my ability to study here. We share the belief that the "best investments are the ones which are made in human resources as it stays for the longest time - lifelong" and thanks again for trusting me for this.

**Angela Benson (Liberia, 1989/90, [angelabenson765@gmail.com](mailto:angelabenson765@gmail.com)).** Upon completion of my IMPH Program Liberia was in the middle of a civil war. My first job after IMPH was to care for the sick and war-injured at the main functioning hospital then – St. Joseph Catholic Hospital in Monrovia in 1991. The devastation and huge gaps for humanitarian support soon led to my recruitment to UNICEF/Liberia to provide emergency and preventive care for children at national level. Fresh from the Braun School of Public Health, I was well prepared for the national work. I was the Project Officer in charge of the expanded program of immunization, supported by UNICEF, for all vaccines against preventable childhood diseases and equipment supplies. Working together with colleagues at the Ministry of Health & Social Welfare, we were able to avert measles outbreaks in all displaced camps where there were huge numbers of people including children with poor sanitation and inadequate water supply. I led the activities toward the high immunization coverage among vulnerable children. UNICEF/Liberia was recognized globally for that excellent work of averting deaths and outbreaks during that conflict period 1992-96 and was given an award (The Africa's Future Award).

Following that I served as Project Officer for Essential Drugs Management, UNICEF/Liberia (1997-1999) with responsibility to estimate the types and cost of essential medicines and supplies needed in all health facilities in the country. We worked with the National Drug Service for the correct estimation, ensured during supervision and evaluation that there were no stock-outs of essential drugs and supplies needed to save lives during the emergency and rehabilitation phases of Liberia's conflicts. My responsibility included preparation of minimum and essential health packages, training mid-level health workers, monitoring and evaluation of the revitalization of Primary Health care in Liberia.

Before the end of 1999, I was recruited by the World Health Organization for the African Region (WHO/AFRO) to join the WHO/Ethiopia office as the epidemiologist and focal person responsible for designing strategies to strengthen the routine immunization in Ethiopia and to optimize the resources for polio eradication. Again my training at the Braun School became very useful in working in a different country and with many international colleagues. With my technical background and working with colleagues at the Ministry of Health and other UN agencies like UNICEF, we trained health workers, conducted supplemental immunization activities and National Immunization and Health Days. Those strategies helped the country to increase the immunization coverage to high levels, as verified in the National Immunization coverage between 2000-2003. The Task Force on Immunization (TFI) in the African Region also recognized and presented an award to Ethiopia for its great success in rapidly increasing its immunization coverage. My responsibility also included technical support for an effective Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) ensuring early detection of epidemics and strategies to contain them. I provided guidance for other National Health priorities including reproductive health, HIV/AIDS/Malaria/TB, Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses and Malnutrition.

By 2003, as acting WHO Representative to Ethiopia, I had the responsibility for a year to advise the Government at senior level through the Ministry of Health on all health policies and technical guidelines reflecting WHO's mission and core strategies. I managed technical and support staff in the 19 programmatic areas of health priorities. During that period, the country office mobilized significant resources to support activities for the drought-affected population in Ethiopia and coordinated the emergency humanitarian activities in the Horn of Africa.

As WHO-Representative in Lesotho (2005-2010) I represented WHO excellently and provided support as needed at senior administrative, technical, managerial and diplomatic levels. This included provision of technical support in all health activities in accordance with WHO policies. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and UN agencies, I spearheaded the Lesotho Flagship HIV Project of "Know Your Status Campaign" whereby everyone over age 12 years is encouraged and counseled to be tested and know their HIV status and be followed-up as necessary - in a country ranking third globally for highest HIV prevalence at that time. These activities led to a significant drop in the incidence of HIV and reduction in stigma and discrimination associated with the disease.

As WHO Africa Regional Adviser on Emergency and Humanitarian Action (2010-2011), I was assigned to the WHO Regional Office in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. My work covered the African Region with inter-country support teams and country teams to develop, coordinate, monitor and evaluate regional capacity building, training on emergency preparedness, Response and Humanitarian Assistance in the health sector. We developed appropriate logistic systems and technical oversight as well as mobilizing necessary resources for timely assistance to countries when emergencies occur.

Back home 2012 - June 2013. Worked in the Ministry of Health to set-up the foundation for the smooth implementation of an innovative project between the Government and USAID. Using Performance-based Financing (PBF) mechanism in health facilities, services are provided to meet agreed health indicators and deliverables. After quarterly reporting and verification, the Government is reimbursed an agreed sum of money. It is a pilot project and is ongoing for future accountability, efficiency in the health system and decision-making. The training and practical experiences I received at the Braun School of Public Health contributed greatly to helping me provide comprehensive and excellent public health services at national and international levels. I am so grateful to be part of this outstanding and historic Alma Mater.

We are very proud of IMPH Graduate *Dr. Kioko Kiilu* of Kenya (2006/7) who headed up the Red Cross rescue operations during the Westgate terrorist attack in September. Here is his account ...

**WESTGATE MALL CRISIS: The Golden Hour!** Kioko Kiilu (Kenya, 2006/07, [kiokokk@gmail.com](mailto:kiokokk@gmail.com) ), Emergency Health Manager, Kenya Red Cross



Kioko Kiilu, Emergency Health Manager (in cap) with Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) is assisted by other KRCS staff, volunteers and well wishers during the evacuation of victims in the Westgate mall attack on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2013.

On Saturday 21st September 2013, shortly before 1 pm, as I left Kenyatta National Hospital, I received a call from our Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) that the Israeli owned Westgate mall has been attacked with mass casualties and fatalities being reported on the spot. What lay ahead is a story to be told to generations. An armed group gained forceful entry into Westgate Shopping Mall in the capital city of

**Nairobi, Kenya, and attacked members of the public with hand grenades and gun shots. Westgate Mall is a popular shopping centre with the diplomatic**

community, Kenyans and foreign visitors. It is a multi-story building with a basement and rooftop parking that also houses the mainstream department stores, banks, phone centres and electronic shops, boutiques, coffee shops, movie theatre and party/amusement areas. On an average weekend, human traffic to the Mall is estimated at about 10,000 shoppers with lunch time peak. After the call from EOC, I found my way to Uhuru highway where I was picked by a KRCS ambulance enroute to Westgate Mall. Instantly, on arrival at the scene less than an hour after the attack, I deputized the Secretary General (KRCS, CEO) who had arrived earlier and assumed the Incident Command. We quickly found our way to the rooftop parking where several bodies lay surrounded by helpless casualties with multiple fractures and bleeding all over.

The scene was terrifying at first sight but as a first responder I knew my business was to save lives. Quickly I started stabilizing victims and evacuating them using the ambulances that had come from all over the city. Within the first hour we had evacuated over 60 seriously injured casualties and removed 15 bodies. In the process the situation worsened with more gun shots being heard from within the building and we had to take cover. Shortly a special unit from the Kenya Defense Forces arrived and we coordinated the evacuation of more people who were stuck in the mall. Over 600 persons were evacuated and taken straight to hospital.

Before nightfall, all systems within the KRCS disaster operation were active and running. A well-wisher gave space at the Visa Oshwal community centre where KRCS set up a command centre. Tracing and restoration of family links (RFL) had set up an information desk, psychosocial counselors were already on site and volunteers set up a triage



The triage centre set up by KRCS outside the Westgate mall on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2013

centre for further evacuation and recovery after the KDF secured and cordoned off the building. At close of day one KDF was still inside the building fighting the terrorists and trying to secure the building before further humanitarian workers could be allowed in to carry out further evacuation and retrieval of bodies. Kenya Red Cross continued to lead the humanitarian work for the following days. Consequently I embarked on writing situation updates for the operation, as well as requesting funding from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) that was approved and disbursed within 24 hours. The Kenya Red Cross value proposition is: "Always there", First in Last out (FILO),

and we remained true. I am happy that I was part of the team that saved many lives, and my heartfelt condolences to those who lost their loved ones. May they RIP.

## **The European Public Health Conference**

The European Public Health Conference just took place in Brussels. The conference is hosted by The European Public Health Association (EUPHA) and the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER). At the ASPHER General Assembly that was held during the conference, the Department of Public Health of Dokuz Eylul University in Izmir, Turkey was voted in as the 100<sup>th</sup> member institution of ASPHER. The Department is headed by IMPH alumna Prof. Belgin Unal (Turkey, 1998/9) who presented her institution at the meeting. IMPH alumnus Prof. Enver Roshi (Albania, 1996/7), Director of Institute of Public Health in Tirana (ASPHER member of several years) represented his institute at the meeting. Prof. Yehuda Neumark, Braun School director, was elected to the ASPHER Executive Board and to co-chair the Working Group on Innovations and Good Practices in Public Health Education. Yehuda will prepare a brief report on ASPHER and its potential relevance to IMPH graduates in the near future.

## **Congratulations**

We send our congratulations to Xu Jieshuang (Stella) (China, 2002/03, [jshxu@fudan.rdu.cn](mailto:jshxu@fudan.rdu.cn)) who has been awarded a Ph.D. degree in Public Health at Fudan University. Her topic was "Engaging Civil Society Organizations in Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy Process in Mainland of China". The study was published with her as first author in the *Journal of Chinese Studies* in May 2013 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/chnstd.2013.23019>).

Also to Sergey Zhivin (Russia, 2010/11, [sergey.zhivin@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:sergey.zhivin@mail.huji.ac.il)), who is first author of an article published in *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, "Impact of Chemical Exposure on Cancer Mortality in a French Cohort of Uranium Processing Workers".

We are proud to announce that our graduate Sandra Sazdovska (Macedonia, 2011/12, [sandra.sazdovska@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:sandra.sazdovska@mail.huji.ac.il)) received the Faculty of Medicine Prize for outstanding Master's Thesis. Her thesis, "Parent-of-Origin Effects on Birth Weight" was mentored by Prof. Yechiel Friedlander and Dr. Hagit Hochner.

## **Our graduates write**

Sandy Fortuna (Philippines, 1992/93, [Sandy.Fortuna@plan-international.org](mailto:Sandy.Fortuna@plan-international.org)): I am always looking forward to read the newsletter despite the fact that I moved from public health work to management and now to capacity building of staff and partners of Plan International. We recently launched the Academy. If you have

time, you can visit the website. [www.plan-academy.org](http://www.plan-academy.org)

**Sume Gerald Etapelong (Cameroon, 2006/07, [pampampascal@yahoo.com](mailto:pampampascal@yahoo.com) ):**  
Thanks for wishing me well in my new assignment with WHO. It would not have been possible without the Braun School and Pears. Your contribution for a positive change is of great impact to the world at large. A cross section of the participants from the last meeting is a proof to this fact. We are more than grateful with the foundation you gave us. This is why we, the graduates of the Braun School, always make the difference irrespective of where we find ourselves.

**Ronaldo L. Maddela (Philippines, 1988/89, [Rmaddela@Mannatech.com](mailto:Rmaddela@Mannatech.com) ):**  
Thank you dear School of Public Health, for sharing wonderful news from Jerusalem. Hopefully I can visit that great school again. All that I learned from there is the best. Who would forget: Making sense of Data”, COPC, Prev Med and other subjects taught by our illustrious professors?

**Victoria Lupase (Philippines, 1978,79, [vicky@email.dmsf.edu.ph](mailto:vicky@email.dmsf.edu.ph) ) :** Thank you so much for sending me the newsletter. I am so happy to learn the recent activities of the Hebrew University. I wish that the alumni be convened once again to provide opportunities for sharing and learning the challenges and developments in public health of various countries.

**Peter Waiswa (Uganda, 2002/03, [pwaiswa2001@yahoo.com](mailto:pwaiswa2001@yahoo.com))** is one of the authors of an article published in the *Malaria Journal* 2013,12:170, “Community knowledge and perceptions about indoor residual spraying for malaria prevention in Soroti district, Uganda: a cross-sectional study”.

We were greatly distressed to hear from our dear graduate Martz (Maria Soledad Antonio, Philippines 1990/92, [mariasoledad.antonio@gmail.com](mailto:mariasoledad.antonio@gmail.com)) that she is bravely fighting cancer. She has requested that her friends and the IMPH “family” pray for her recovery.



**Contact Information**

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