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"CERHI... Advancing better reproductive health for West and Central Africa".



CERHI NEWSLETTER



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INNOVATION (CERHI)
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, NIGERIA

CERHI 2020 NEWSLETTER

A Publication of CERHI- UNIBEN

VOLUME 3



Featuring:
SPESSE Grant
Seedling Lab Awards
African Textbook Partnership Project
CERHI'S response to covid-19
Student Scholarship
& more...

CERHI Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation

"CERHI... Advancing better reproductive health for West and Central Africa".



As ACE 1 ends, UNIBEN welcomes a new Vice-Chancellor

Prof. Lilian I. Salami

(Vice Chancellor, University Of Benin)



As ACE 1 project was coming to a close, the tenure of the Vice-Chancellor with whom CERHI worked for 5 years also ended. A new Vice-Chancellor Professor Lilian Imuetinyan Salami (nee Emovon) was appointed to replace him, and she assumed office on December 1, 2019. Professor Salami is the tenth substantive and the second female Vice Chancellor of the University of Benin, Benin City.

Prof. Lilian Imuetinyan Salami is a professor of human nutrition at the Faculty of Education in the University. She has served in various administrative positions at the University of Benin including being Dean, Faculty of Education, Director of Part-time Studies, Director of General Studies, and as the Head of the Department of Vocational and Technical Education of the University.

She also served as the Director-General/Chief Executive of the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), a post she occupied very meritoriously from 2016 until her appointment as Vice-Chancellor.

Professor Lilian Salami is a recipient of several national and international awards. She is a Fellow of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria, a Fellow of the International Federation of Home Economics Professional Association of Nigeria, a Fellow the Research Institute at NIEPA, and also a Fellow of the Institute of Strategic Management of Nigeria.

Since 2013 she has received up to 21 local and international awards, some of which include Ondo State Role Model Award as the Woman of the Year in the State, 2019, Award of Excellence in leadership by the Federation of Ondo Ekimogun Students' Union, and a Special Recognition Award at the 3rd Edo/Delta Icons and Stars Award, 2018. These awards testify to the way and manner the services provided by Professor Lilian Salami have impacted on individuals, groups and communities, and it especially indicates the mentoring and coaching roles has played over the years.

The Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) appreciates the Vice Chancellor for her support, mentorship and roles she had played in ensuring sustainability and growth of the Institution.



CERHI: BREAKING NEW FRONTIERS IN RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Professor Friday Okonofua

Centre Leader, CERHI



The African Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) at the University of Benin has truly come of age. Founded in December 2014 with funding from the World Bank and under the tutelage of the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Association of African Universities (AAU), it was one of the initial 22 such centers established under the African Centers of Excellence 1 (ACE 1) project of the World Bank that was aimed at promoting quality tertiary education for development in the West and Central African Region. Subsequently in 2017, under ACE II, the World Bank created additional centers in the East African region. In view of the high success of ACE I, the World Bank called for new proposals in 2018

for renewal of the centers that performed well under ACE I, and also for additional new Centers.

CERHI was one of the initial ACE I centers whose proposal was approved for renewal for ACE III (Impact ACE) implementation, which is designed to ensure the generation of high impact for the ACE program to enable the attainment of sustainable development at institutional, sub-national and national levels.

ACE I programming officially ended in July 2020, with CERHI adjudged to have attained all the milestones and commitments it had negotiated with the World Bank. CERHI is now one of the 53 ACE projects funded across 10 countries in Africa that are implementing both the ACE1 and the ACE III Impact projects.

The implementation of ACE III Impact project began in January 2019. A recent review showed that CERHI has continued to maintain its high-level effectiveness in the implementation of the project activities. We are convinced that future assessments will improve the rating of CERHI in the tempo of implementation of the project.

However, a major challenge has been the COVID-19 pandemic which had tended to reduce the propensity and tenacity of the project implementation. The closure of the University of Benin due to the pandemic, and indeed, the economic lock-down that greatly affected our areas of operation hampered the project.

However, we remained undiminished. Being an innovative and creative project, we identified new ways and new directions to circumvent the difficulties and to implement the project. Some of the resilient strategies we carried out included: 1) holding project meetings, lectures, and tutorials online; 2) continuing with our research, especially writing papers from data we previously



generated; 3) supervising students either on a restricted one-on-one basis or through on-line platforms; and 4) ensuring that the CERHI secretariat was always open with limited staff in attendance.

Due to our tenacious strategy, we were able to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic through intense research and service delivery. As soon as the pandemic became evident, we established collaboration with the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) to establish a COVID-19 Research and Service Delivery Team. We lent the real time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) machine of the Centre for use by this team for the diagnosis of COVID-19 in Edo State. Indeed, the testing mechanism we put in place was later validated by the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and is currently one of only two laboratories in Edo State being used for the diagnosis of COVID-19. The CERHI/UBTH/UNIBEN Research Team has been active in collating research data and conducting new community-based research to enable the evidence-based understanding of the nature and impact of the pandemic, at least within Nigeria's context.

In June 2020, the Research Team submitted a proposal following a call for proposals by the Nigerian COVID-19 Research Consortium (NCRC) in collaboration with the African Centre of Excellence for Genomics of Infectious Diseases (ACEGID) aimed at validating the available rapid testing kits in Nigeria for the diagnosis of COVID-19. This proposal was subsequently accepted, and CERHI/UBTH/ACEGID team is now one of six teams conducting this validation study in Nigeria.

Indeed, CERHI has been most productive despite the unexpected COVID-19 difficulties. Some of our most recent accomplishments include the following: 1) successful data analysis leading to the development of new manuscripts, several of which have been accepted for publications in international peer review journals; 2) contributions of CERHI staff to the special editions on COVID-19 published by the Proceedings of the Nigerian Academy of Science, and the African Journal of Reproductive Health; 3) admission of a new cohort of regional students; 4) successful negotiation with Harvard University for the establishment of a high-fidelity simulation laboratory at the University of Benin; 5) the donation of high quality laboratory equipment to CERHI laboratory by Seedling Lab, USA; 6) the development of a new proposal leading to the award of a \$11 million (eleven million dollar) grant for the establishment of a Centre of Excellence in sustainable Procurement, Environmental, and Social Standards (SSPESE) at the University of Benin – CERHI currently mentors this new Centre; 7) the award of an African Book project to the University of Benin through CERHI for the provision of online books to ALL departments of the University by Imano; and 8) the submission of two research proposals to relevant agencies for which CERHI has passed the first phases of assessment.

Many of these milestones will be featured and described in detail in this newsletter.

In conclusion, the Project Management Committee of CERHI, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Benin, Professor Lilian Salami, and the entire University community is exceedingly grateful to officials of the World Bank, the NUC, the AAU, and our scientific experts, who have guided us and supported us in the implementation of this essential project. We are committed to its effective delivery and promise to work towards achieving the goal of using this novel platform to work towards the development of Nigeria and the African region.



ABOUT THE AFRICAN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INNOVATION (CERHI)



CERHI is a World Bank-supported project at the University of Benin whose mission is to implement high quality training and applied research for professionals needed to build a new cohort of human resource to tackle the population and reproductive health challenges in the African region.

The vision of CERHI **is to** be a leading institution providing innovative and transformational changes on matters relating to population and development and the improvement of the living standards of citizens in Africa.

The goal of CERHI and to develop and implement a sustainable model for increasing the availability and applicable training of nurses and midwives needed to tackle the unique reproductive health challenges in the West and Central African region, particularly in rural, underserved areas.



The specific objectives of the program are as follows:

- 1) Strengthen the implementation of the CERHI program for increased policy and industry on-the-ground relevance in West and Central Africa.
- 2) Strengthen the delivery of the CERHI's Masters and PhD programs in Nursing to provide more industry-ready postgraduate Nurses and Midwives ready to take on more prominent roles in the delivery of primary health care and public health in the region.
- 3) Field important short courses in Nursing and Midwifery (and among traditional birth attendants) to build competencies in the delivery of reproductive health maternal and child health; and
- 4) Conduct applied research for scaling the use of quality nursing and midwifery services for reproductive, maternal and child health care, that can be translated broadly into policy statements for implementation region wide.

The program which commenced in 2016, has acquired some of the most up-to-date pedagogical, research and laboratory facilities that compete favorably with some of the best in any part of the World, and has graduated its first set of students. The program particularly invites applications from students in other African countries, as CERHI has excellent training facilities that will meet their needs, including a fully air-conditioned international students' hostel complete with 24-hours internet access and a wonderful receptivity by the University community throughout their stay.

International Accreditation of CERHI and its courses



All CERHI programmes have received international accreditation from the [Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation \(APHEA\) based in Belgium](#). In addition, two of our short courses were given international accreditation as a [Continuing Training & Education Event \(CTEE\)](#). CERHI also received international accreditation from the High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES), France for Masters programmes in Nursing, Reproductive Health and Health Economics. All CERHI programmes have had national accreditation from the National Universities Commission (NUC) of Nigeria. Our graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to compete with their peers trained in other parts of the World. **Programmes offered:**

- 1) MSc and PhD in Reproductive Health
- 2) MPH and PhD in Public Health with specialization in Reproductive and Family Health
- 3) MSc and PhD in Nursing Sciences
- 4) MSc and PhD in Health Economics
- 5) MSc and PhD in Maternal and Child Health Nursing
- 6) Short Courses



DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY MSC AND PHD IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Dr. James Osai

Head of Department, Department Of Obstetrics And Gynaecology



The department in conjunction with the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) at the University of Benin has made giant strides in its Masters (MSc) and PhD programs in Reproductive Health. At the same time, plans towards Short Courses in reproductive health policy topics are on top gear.

Since inception in 2015, we've had 53 students (43 National students and 10 International students) in the Master program and 11 students (National students) in the PhD program at the various stages of the programs. 22 students (17 National students and 5 international students) in the master's program have graduated. While the others are at the final stage of the program. While the final defense for the PhD students has been scheduled for the first quarter of 2021.

The internship, an innovative component of the program facilitated by robust collaboration with the regional and international institutions, has helped to improve our students in the areas of research and industrial applications—evidence by students post-internship reports and presentations. Furthermore, our student's follow-up program has revealed that a significant number of our graduands (National and international) are doing very well as program managers driving reproductive health initiative in their respective Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). CERHI, under the leadership of Professor F. Okonofua, has assisted the department tremendously to attain this fit, and we look forward to taking the program to a greater height. **Entry Requirements:**

MSc Reproductive Health

First Degree from a University recognized by the University of Benin in Medicine, Health, Natural and Applied Sciences with a minimum of Second Class Honours.

PhD Reproductive Health

MSc in Health Sciences or MPH from Universities recognized by the University of Benin.

For complete details on entry requirements and how to apply, please check the last page of this newsletter.



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS & STATISTICS

MSC AND PH.D. IN HEALTH ECONOMICS

Dr. Clement A.U. Ighodaro

Acting Head of Department of Economics & Statistics



The Department was established in September 1975 as a sub-section of the Department of Economics and Business Studies. It became autonomous and full-fledged in July 1977 as the Department of Economics and Statistics and in 1978, produced its first set of graduates. Its name was changed to Department of Economics in 2017. The Department also runs Master and PhD programmes on full time basis and has produced several graduates in these regard. It is one of the few Departments in African Universities that is running the Collaborative PhD Programme in Economics with the Africa Economic Research Consortium (AERC) domiciled in Kenya. It also runs a programme in Health Economics on full time basis in partnership with the

Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) domiciled in the University of Benin at the Master and PhD levels.

The Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) at the University of Benin, Nigeria was established in 2016. CERHI is a World Bank-supported project whose mission is to implement high quality training and applied research for professionals needed to build a new cohort of human resource to tackle the population and region. Out of the four (4) courses being offered in CERHI is Health Economics which is being housed by the Department of Economics. With both national (National University Commission (NUC) and international accreditations (such as Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation (APHEA) and the High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES), France, the Health Economics Post-graduate programmes (M.Sc and PhD) have grown in leaps and bounds. From the 2017/2018 sessions and the 2018/2019 sessions, CERHI has produced one PhD graduate and several other Masters graduates, while many others are at different stages of completing their programmes.

As part of the Centre's positive experiences, it is compulsory for its Masters and PhD students to undergo internships for at least one month in national, regional and international industry locations, a development that has helped to create avenues for CERHI students to learn skills and enabled graduates to get jobs. As its drive to foster research and human capital development, CERHI has so far sponsored three (3) academic staff and students to present papers at local, regional and international scientific conferences in Health Economics in Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda, among others and participate in workshops in Ondo State, Malawi and South Africa.

Entry Requirements:

MSc Health Economics

- a). A Postgraduate Diploma in Economics related courses.
- b). A First Degree in Economics and relevant disciplines with a minimum of Second Class Lower Division.



PhD Health Economics

- a) Hold M.Sc. degree (which includes coursework and research) in Health Economics, Health Management/ Administration or Health Policy or in a related area from University of Nigeria or any other recognized University provided the University admission grades requirements of a minimum CPGA of 3.0/4.0 or 3.5/5.0 are satisfied.
- B) In addition, a relevant working experience in Health Management and Policy matters will be an advantage.

For complete details on entry requirements and how to apply, please check the last page of this newsletter.

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING SCIENCE MSC AND PHD IN NURSING SCIENCES

Dr. (Mrs.) Christie E. Omorogbe

Ag. Head of Department of Nursing Science



Nursing is an integral part of the health care system, encompasses the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and care of physically ill, mentally ill, and disabled people of all ages, in all health care and other community settings.

The Bachelor of Nursing Science (B.N.SC) programme is a generic nursing programme developed in response to the societal needs and demand for polyvalent nurses who are educate in an institution of higher learning. The current trends in nursing also justify a higher academic level of scientific involvement in nursing practice that can cope with new innovations and advancement in technology. Since there is a yearning for a higher education in nursing, the University of Benin decided to provide

training in this area. At the 186th regular meeting of Senate held on Tuesday 23rd **December** 2003.

Senate approved the proposal for the establishment of School of Basic Medical Sciences to be based in the College of Medical Sciences. The School of Basic Medical Sciences took off initially, in the 2003/2004 academic session with the Department of Anatomy, Physiology and Medical Biochemistry. Accordingly, in 2007/2008 Academic Session, the Department of nursing Science took off with examination conducted by the joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and Post University Matriculation Examination (PUME) which used to be handled by the university.

The Department is also running a post graduate programme with Specialization in Reproductive Health Nursing in Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) and had successfully graduated students in both Master (M.Sc.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in reproductive health nursing. Other post graduate specialty programmer that are about to commence are; Medical Surgical Nursing with sub specialty in (Critical Care Nursing, Accident and Emergency Nursing, Perioperative Nursing, Ophthalmic Nursing etc.), Maternal and Child Health Nursing, Community Health Nursing, Mental Health and Psychiatry Nursing, and Nursing Education.

**Entry Requirements:****MSc Nursing Science (Reproductive Health)**

First Degree in Nursing Sciences with a minimum of Second Class.

PhD Nursing Science (Reproductive Health)

MSc Degree in Nursing Science with a weighted score of 60%.

For complete details on entry requirements and how to apply, please check the last page of this newsletter.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH MPH AND PHD OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN REPRODUCTIVE AND FAMILY HEALTH

Dr. Esohe Ogboghodo

Ag Head of Department of Community Health



While preventable morbidities and mortalities related to reproductive and family health continue to constitute great burdens on societies and families in developing countries, especially Nigeria. In particular, maternal and child deaths are extremely high in Nigeria and have been shown to be the most distinguishing features between developed and developing countries. Hence, reproductive and family health therefore deserves separate and integrated approaches in the context of family life.

The overall aim of the MPH and Ph.D. in public health in reproductive and family health is to develop human resources with high-level technical skills and competence to provide and lead integrated preventive and promote public health interventions in reproductive and family health.

Entry Requirements:**MPH Public Health in Reproductive and Family Health**

A first degree in any health-related Science not below Second Class

PhD in Public Health in Reproductive and Family Health

A Master Degree in Public Health or fields related to reproductive & Family Health

Please Note: (B.Sc. Public Health and B.Sc. Community Health are not acceptable for admission)

For complete details on entry requirements and how to apply, please check the last page of this newsletter.



Examples of some short courses offered by CERHI

Data Analysis & Scientific Writing for Reproductive health: *This course will target Master and PhD students at the School of Public Health and others in Ghana.*

Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: *The target audiences for this short course are NGOs, Policy Makers, Public Health Practitioners and researchers.*

Contemporary Issues in Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health: *The audience for this course will be practitioners from Ghana Health Service, Ministry of Health and NGOs.*

Managing ART delivery in HIV Service delivery: *This course will be for doctors and nurses running HIV clinics in Ghana.*

Mitigating the economic burden of maternal mortality: A policy initiative for sustainable growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: *this short course targets students, health providers and policymakers in reproductive and maternal health in the West African region*

Mitigating the burden of high dependency ratio in Sub-Saharan Africa: A policy panacea for enhancing sustainable economic growth: *This short course targets students, health providers and policymakers in reproductive and maternal health in the West African region*

Improving Policies and Programs on Effective Family Planning Delivery in Africa: *Family Planning Providers, Policy Makers, NGOs and CBOs, Working In Reproductive Health Fields*

Computation of vital health statistics with the aid of econometric software: *A robust policy simulation initiative: This short course targets students, health providers and policymakers.*

Understanding Gender, Rights and Ethical Issues- Implications for Reproductive Health: *This short course targets Post Graduate Students, Health Providers, Policy Makers, NGOs and Human Rights Advocates.*

Preventing Maternal Deaths- Sharing Regional Experiences and Developing a Common Plan of Action: *This short course targets Health Providers, NGOs and Policy Makers across Countries in West Africa.*

Officers of CERHI:

Professor Friday Okonofua – Center Leader

Professor Florence Adeyemo – Deputy Centre Leader

Professor Akhere Omonkhua - Project Coordinator

Professor Alphonsus Isara - Monitoring & Evaluation Officer

Mrs Christy Omwanghe -Project Auditor

Ms. Abhuohien Ebewe - Project Accountant

Mr. Emmanuel Ehiorobo - Procurement Officer

Ms. Vivian Ify Onoh - Program Manager

Mr. Innocent Alikah – Assistant Program Manager

Mr. Wellington Ogbemudia – Webmaster / Communication officer



Some accomplishments of CERHI under ACE1

Under ACE 1, CERHI was successful in achieving ALL its project milestones and indicators and was paid the full funds initially awarded by the World Bank. Some of the achievements and milestones of CERHI under ACE1 include the following:

1. The construction of the secretariat building at the University of Benin campus with fully equipped lecture halls and seminar rooms, library with 20,000 books and various e-learning materials (Ebscohost, Hinari, Science Direct, Springer, Wiley, etc.), with a standby generator and internet hub providing 24-hours electricity and internet services.
2. A fully functional research and clinical laboratory complete with modern equipment, including a genetic laboratory.
3. The rehabilitation, furnishing and fully functional international students' hostel and ultra-modern Guest house.
4. Accreditation of 9 MSc and Ph.D. courses by the National Universities Commission (NUC).
5. International Institutional accreditation for all CERHI programs by the Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation (APHEA).
6. International Program accreditation of 3 CERHI programs (PhD Health Economics, MSc Reproductive Health and MSc Nursing Science) by High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES), France
7. The recruitment of a total 788 Masters Students, 83 Ph.D. students and 1056 students in short courses across the four disciplines.
8. Recruitment of 70 regional students from 5 African countries – Gambia, Ghana, Cameroon, Guinea and Malawi, with 11 MSc and PhD students from the Gambia graduating in December 2017.

9. 249 MSc students and 16 Ph.D. students attending internships of at least one month in national, regional and international industry locations.
10. 48 staff and 10 students sponsored to attend and present papers at local, regional and international scientific conferences in reproductive health.
11. The publication of 244 scientific articles by CERHI staff in highly rated international journals.
12. CERHI provided personnel and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) machine and is collaborating with the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) for COVID-19 testing and related research.
13. CERHI currently has 16 national partners, 8 regional partners and 8 international partners

CERHI receives AREF Excell researcher and leadership development grant

At the instance of the Centre Leader of the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI), University of Benin, Prof. Friday Okonofua; Prof. Akhere Omonkhua, the Project Coordinator of CERHI, applied for the Africa Research Excellence Fund (AREF) Excell Programme on March 14, 2018

AREF is a charity organization under the umbrella of the Medical Research Foundation (MRF), UK. It works to strengthen health research capacity in sub-Saharan Africa.

CERHI, University of Benin, was selected, as one of the six African institutions and the only institution from Nigeria, to participate in the AREF's Excell Research Leadership Programme in May 2018. The CERHI-UNIBEN-AREF Excell team is composed of Prof. Akhere Omonkhua - the Institutional Lead; and two outstanding Excell Fellows –

Dr. Oyetunde Oyeyemi and Dr Enitome Bafor. In addition to the research leadership development training directed to the Excell Fellows, the team worked with the CERHI Centre Leader to implement an Institutional



Implementing World Bank development projects: some lessons learnt



THE WORLD BANK

The Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI), University of Benin is a World Bank funded project. This is the first time the University is implementing a World Bank funded project of this scope.

This grant award different from other grants often received by Universities for the implementation of research and other projects. Whereas funds are often paid upfront for the implementation of grants awarded by other donors, the World Bank offers its grantmaking through what a mechanism is called "Disbursement Link Indicators (DLI)". DLI means that whereas the funds are available to the institution to which the grant is awarded, they can only be disbursed if the institution means certain performance indicators. These indicators are first agreed to by World Bank officials and the institution beforehand before the grant is awarded. Funds can therefore only be paid to the grant receiving institutions if the indicators are verified to have been achieved by the World Bank.

In this regard, some of the disbursement linked indicators for CERHI in the on-going impact ACE grant include the following:

1. **Students' Enrolments:** Student enrollment is focused on gender and regionalization. National and 84 regional students must be enrolled for the MSc and PhD programmes. All targets must have at least 25% female students. Money is only disbursed for every enrolled and verified student. Verification is through the process of contacting the students, with clear responses made by the students to questions asked by the World Bank verifier
2. **Research:** In order to earn funds for publications, all research and publications must be published in

Elsevier rated journals. Any publication outside the recommended journals will not be verified. The papers published under the project are submitted to the World Bank that then designates an Elsevier representative to authenticate and verify publications. Payments are then made to the institutions based on the actual number of publications verified by Elsevier.

3. **Short Courses:** Students must undergo appropriate short courses of 40 hours minimum. Any short course less than the recommended 40 hours will not be verified. Students who attended such courses are then contacted by the World Bank, after which the institution will be accredited by the number of short course attendees and then paid appropriately.
4. **National and International Accreditation:** Host University should pursue national and international accreditations for programmes offered. The international accreditations encourage foreign students to apply which in turn increase student turn over. Again, the steps attained by the institution in obtaining international accreditation are verified by the World Bank with evidence, after which the institution will be paid the allotted funds for this aspect of the project.
5. **Web Transparency:** Timeless reporting of activities, events, meetings, records and financial audit reports must be made available online for the purpose of transparency.
6. **Institutional Impact:** This targets the host university. Revise strategic plan, availability of internet connections, learning management systems and backup servers.



Project spanning from June, 2018 to January, 2020

CERHI-UNIBEN AREF Excell Institutional Project

The AREF Institutional Project was predicated on each Excell Institutions' immediate needs that could be met by the Institution's Excell team.

The seminar presentations by the CERHI Excell Fellows provided an opportunity for the Fellows to inspire postgraduate students and early to mid-level academics to research excellence. It also served as an opportunity to establish an informal mentoring system within CERHI. During the course of these seminars, CERHI Excell team played host to two AREF facilitators from the UK - Drs. Peter Dukes and Hazel McCullough and used this visit as an opportunity to intimate the then Vice Chancellor, Prof FFO Orumwense, of AREF's activities in CERHI, University of Benin.

The team also organized Concept Note competition among the 26 participants; and the top 3 Concept Notes (independently assessed by the AREF MRF team) were awarded prizes. The following winners received their prizes in an award ceremony chaired by the CERHI Centre Leader on January 17, 2020:

1. Nkeiruka Eluehike
– University of Benin, Benin City
2. Ifeoluwa Oyeyemi
– University of Medical Sciences, Ondo
3. Merit Ayevbuomwan
– University of Benin, Benin City

The success of Excell 1 was possible because of the support of the Vice Chancellor and Management of University of Benin, the guidance of the CERHI Centre Leader, Prof. Friday Okonofua; the enormous support from the AREF Director - Prof Tumani Corrah, AREF Director of Programmes - Dr. Peter Dukes, and other AREF Facilitators (Hazel McCullough, Emma Mairs, Maria Bellocchi, Lamin Sanneh and others). The cohesion among the CERHI UNIBEN AREF Excell team also provided a great impetus for success!



*From left to right – Prof. ES Omoregie (Head, Biochemistry Department), Ifeoluwa Oyeyemi, Merit Ayevbuomwan, Nkeiruka Eluehike (top three Concept Note winners), Prof. Friday Okonofua (CERHI Centre Leader), Prof. Michael Aziken (Former DVC Academic, UNIBEN), Dr. Evelyn Umemezia (Centre Leader, Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement [SPESSE]) and Prof. Akhere Omonkhua.
The Concept Note Award Ceremony (January 17, 2020)*



ELEVENTH ACE 1 AND SECOND ACE IMPACT WORKSHOP - DAKAR, 2019



CERHI'S Participants and facilitators in a group photograph

Representatives from 53 African Centres of Excellence converged in Dakar Senegal to review progress, learn from each other, build networks and forge partnerships to ensure the successful implementation and realization of the project's objectives. CERHI, University of Benin was represented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academics), Deputy Centre Leader, Program Manager, M&E Officer, Project Accountant, Procurement Officer, Project Auditor and Project Coordinator.

The opening ceremony for the 11th ACE 1 and 2nd ACE IMPACT workshops was graced by Dr Cheik Oumar Anne (Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Senegal); Prof Etienne E. Ehile (AAU Secretary General); Veronique Sauvat (Head of the Education Division at the French Development Agency) and Madame Sophie [Naudeau](#) (representative of the Senegal World Bank Country Director). Dr Lamane Mbaye was the facilitator of the opening ceremony.

In his remarks **Prof Etienne E. Ehile** indicated the link between the African Union's Agenda 2063 strategy and the World Bank strategy for

human capital development. He thanked His Excellency Mr. Maki Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and the entire Government of Senegal, for their immense efforts of supporting higher education in Senegal and Africa as a whole.

Closing remarks were delivered by

1. Vincent Perrot (World Bank co-TTL for ACE 1) spoke on behalf of the World Bank ACE Team. He congratulated all the partners and thanked all for the good work- he also thanked ushers, drivers and hotel staff. This had been a big meeting with over 400 participants from 12 African countries.
2. Dr Ousmane Diagana, the World Bank Human Resource Vice President thanked the Government of Senegal for the excellent collaboration. He also thanked the AAU, ministries in each of the participating countries and the various ACEs. He explained that the ACE project was the flagship project of the World Bank and the Bank was investing several hundreds of millions of USD to address the knowledge and skills gap in Sub-Saharan Africa. He said that the Bank was very pleased with the results of the ACE on the ground. USD145 million is being invested for ACE Impact 1 and USD131 million is targeted for the 2nd ACE Impact with co-financing from AFD. Dr Diagana said they were proud of the bilingual aspects promoted by the ACE Project. He reiterated the importance of Higher Education to support primary and secondary education. Economic transformation can be achieved through investing in STEM education and research.
3. Hon. M. Amadou Hott, the Minister of Economy Planning and Cooperation in Senegal was represented by Hon Alioune Ndiaye (Permanent

Secretary). He mentioned that he was honoured to represent the two ministers (Economy and Higher Education). He emphasized some take-away messages from the PSC meetings. He said that the priorities were implementing the rules for ACE 1 closing, handling supervision missions, handling disbursements. Migration to ACE Impact for ACE 1

centres was also a priority. He concluded by saying that the five days of reflection were helpful. He called on all the partners to pull their resources (intellectual, human and financial) together to transform African Higher Education. Finally, Hon Alioune Ndiaye declared the meeting closed.

ACEGID BIOINFORMATICS WORKSHOP

The Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI), University of Benin in collaboration with the African Centre of Excellence in Genomics of Infectious Diseases (ACEGID), Redeemers University, Ede organized a five-day workshop titled “Introduction to Bioinformatics and its Application in Biomedical Research” from November 18 – 22, 2019.

The workshop was a culmination of the efforts of the Centre leaders of ACEGID and CERHI, Prof. Christian Happi and Prof. Friday Okonofua; and expertly delivered by Paul Eniola Oluniyi, Olawoye Idowu, and Abdulsalam Toyin from ACEGID, Redeemers University.

The Workshop was designed as an entry level course aimed at participants with a reasonable biological background but no significant experience with bioinformatics. The course was broadly based on a series of exercises in which a combination of simple analytical tools and reference to publicly available databases were applied to the investigation of different biological questions

The course also provided a soft introduction to Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) data analysis. This module provided basic skills that are needed to process NGS data, such as evaluating data quality, trimming sequences, changing data formats, visualizing data, etc. Participants were taught how to address simple SNP calling and phylogenetic problems in a stepwise manner using open source bioinformatics tools.

The post workshop evaluation revealed that most of the learning outcomes were achieved for the forty-three (43) participants who attended the workshop.



Group photograph of the CERHI Centre Leader – Prof. Friday Okonofua; CERHI Project Coordinator – Prof. Akhere Omonkhua; the workshop facilitators – Paul Eniola Oluniyi, Olawoye Idowu, and Abdulsalam Toyin; and workshop participants



CERHI Medical and Research Laboratory (CMARL)



The CERHI Medical and Research Laboratory (CMARL) was established to fulfill the fourth strategic objective of CERHI which is to develop regional laboratory capacity to support HIV/AIDS and other reproductive health related problems. Laboratory medicine is not only an integral part of addressing reproductive ill health; it plays a pivotal role in reproductive health research.

CMARL is directly overseen by the CMARL Committee, whose mandate include:

1. The establishment of the laboratory
2. Capacity building for multidisciplinary research, and
3. Consolidating the laboratory through international partnerships

To this end, CMARL Committee has organized one workshop on multidisciplinary research and eight seminars on multidisciplinary teams; all aimed at fostering collaborative research using the CERHI laboratory as a platform.

The CERHI Laboratory currently has the following facilities:

1. MIC real time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) machine,
2. ELISA microplate reader and washer,

3. -80 and -20 °C Freezers
4. Semi-automated UV-VIS spectrophotometers
5. Five-part autohaematology analyzer,
6. Digital microscope
7. Refrigerated centrifuge etc

The CERHI laboratory was recently awarded the 2020 Seeding Labs Instrumental Access Award. Through this award, the laboratory will receive equipment worth \$205,000; these include:

1. A flow cytometer
2. Thermo Fisher Scientific liquid chromatography/mass spectrometer (API 3000 LC-MS/MS)
3. A high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) machine
4. Two Thermo Fisher Scientific RT-PCRs
5. -30 and -80 °C Freezers

The equipment currently available in CERHI can accommodate studies to assess immunological status (CD4, CD8) of different disease models; effect of medicinal plants/natural products on cell viability and cell cycle of cancer cell lines and other disease models; gene expression and molecular biology studies; chemical profiling etc. The goal of the CERHI laboratory is to be a hub for advancing locally relevant and globally acceptable multidisciplinary research to tackle reproductive health and other biomedical health challenges.



SEEDLING LAB AWARDS THE 2020 INSTRUMENTAL ACCESS GRANT TO CERHI



**CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INNOVATION**
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, NIGERIA



The Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI), University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria is one of 18 awardees to receive equipment that will build scientific infrastructure to advance research and teaching from the 2020 Seeding Labs Instrumental Access.

CERHI greatly appreciates the management and staff of University of Benin, led by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Lilian I. Salami, for the excellent support the Centre has received. The uncanny leadership of the CERHI Centre Leader, Professor Friday Okonofua, who was in the fore-front of the 2020 Instrumental Access award, is also highly appreciated.

Seeding Labs is a Boston-based nonprofit empowering every scientist to transform the world. Through a coalition of more than 140 public and private sector partners, Seeding Labs connects scientists in developing nations with lab equipment, training, and opportunities to collaborate with experts in their field—and to use these vital resources to improve education, research, and economic development.

To date, Seeding Labs' Instrumental Access program has shipped 255 tons of lab equipment to 80 institutions in 36 developing countries worldwide. Its [TeleScience](https://telescience.org) platform, viewed in more than 130 countries, offers a video library of lab tips and tricks to share scientific expertise remotely. Additional information about Seeding Labs is available at <https://seedinglabs.org>

The journey resulting in this award was initiated in 2018 by the CERHI Centre Leader, Prof. Friday Okonofua. The proposal was led

by Professor Akhere Omonkhua, the Chairman of the CERHI Medical and Research Laboratory (CMARL) Committee, with contributions from Dr. Enitome Bafor, an associate member of CERHI; and the heads of departments of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Community/Public Health, Drs James Osaikhuwuomwan and Vincent Adam.

The application was based on the activities of CMARL. CERHI, through the CERHI Medical and Research Laboratory (CMARL), champions multidisciplinary laboratory research that seeks not only to serve the relevant academic programmes of CERHI but also related disciplines in the wider University community. The Centre currently collaborates with several departments in the Faculties of Basic Medical Sciences, Life Sciences, and Pharmacy in multidisciplinary research. Indeed, the two proposals that were included in the application for the Seeding Labs 2020 Instrumental Access were part of the multidisciplinary teams established by CMARL. The laboratory equipment donated by Seeding Labs (such as a flow cytometer; real time PCR machines; high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) machine; -30 and -80 °C Freezers liquid chromatography/mass spectrometer -API 3000 LC-MS/MS etc) will greatly enhance the laboratory facilities of CMARL which will ultimately contribute to improving the quality of research in the University

Although CERHI Medical and Research Laboratory already has a decent array of laboratory equipment; the high-tech equipment donated by Seeding Labs Instrumental Access would greatly improve research output in CERHI and indeed the rest of the University of Benin.



Most organizations give fellowships and scholarships for students to go to advanced laboratories to do good research, while this is very commendable; what Seeding labs is doing is unique, as it makes these equipment available locally. This makes it possible for the majority of budding researchers in low and middle income countries to do very excellent

research in their home country. We are thus grateful to Seeding Labs for the donation of laboratory equipment worth two hundred and five thousand US Dollars (\$205,000) and for collaborating with us to improve the quality of our science in our own environment!

INITIATION OF THE COVID-19 TESTING INITIATIVE IN BENIN CITY: CERHI/UBTH PARTNERSHIP



Professor Friday Okonofua, Centre Leader of CERHI and Professor Darlington Obaseki, Chief Medical Director, UBTH

One of the major challenges at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic was the gross inadequacy of testing facilities in Nigeria. The current gold standard for testing COVID-19 remains the nucleic acid polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. Using the platform of the CERHI laboratory which has a highly functional and ultramodern PCR machine; CERHI collaborated with the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) to set up a COVID-19 testing unit. This was initiated by the CERHI Centre Leader, Prof. Friday Okonofua, who contacted the Director General of Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu, via email (March 31, 2020) with the proposal to use CERHI laboratory facilities in collaboration with UBTH to set up a COVID-19 testing Centre. Thereafter, the CERHI Centre Leader and the Chief Medical Director of UBTH, Prof. Darlington Obaseki proceeded to inaugurate a Joint Committee to oversee the setting up and operationalization of the COVID-19 Testing Centre in UBTH. A Memorandum of

Understanding (MoU) on the Joint COVID-19 Testing was signed between CERHI and UBTH on April 15, 2020.

The Centre Leader, the UBTH Chief Medical Director, the Joint Committee as well as other collaborators such as the Edo State Government and the Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital (ISTH) worked assiduously to ensure that the establishment of the COVID-19 Testing Centre. The accreditation of the Unit by NCDC was announced on May 10, 2020

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/05/covid-19-ubth-commences-testing/>;
<https://tribuneonlinegr.com/ubth-commences-covid-19-testing-in-edo/>.

CERHI, in collaboration with UBTH and the African Centre of Excellence of Genomics of Infectious Diseases (ACEGID), responded to a National Call for proposals by the Nigeria COVID-19 Research Consortium (NCRC) for the validation of COVID-19 antibodies rapid diagnostic kits in June, 2020. The selection of the CERHI-UBTH-ACEGID team was announced on the 15th of August, 2020. The CERHI-UBTH-ACEGID team, working with the other five teams from across Nigeria, recently submitted a finalized national protocol to the NCRC for the validation of COVID-19 antibodies/antigens rapid diagnostic kits.

The CERHI Centre leader - Prof. Friday Okonofua and the CERHI Project Coordinator- Prof. Akhere Omonkhua;



initiated a Call for submission of articles for a special edition of the African Journal of Reproductive Health (AJRH) on COVID-19. The special edition was designed to create a platform for African researchers to document unique outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. The special edition on COVID-19, which was edited by the CERHI Centre Leader and CERHI Project Coordinator, published 19 articles in August, 2020 that clearly showed the unique perspectives of COVID-19 in Africa <https://www.ajrh.info/index.php/ajrh/issue/view/104>.

The Centre also commenced a phenomenological study on the experiences of individuals who recovered from COVID-19 infection in Nigeria. The team has completed the interviews and is currently analysing the data obtained.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a unique opportunity to re-evaluate several aspects of service delivery at CERHI. It has also revealed aspects that require urgent

improvement to ensure uninterrupted service delivery such as optimization of online teaching/learning platforms. While many activities have transited to online modes; other activities such as hands on laboratory workshops cannot be fully handled online. We therefore look forward to relative normalcy so the lessons learnt can be harmonized for better delivery of services.



Members of the Joint Committee of UBTH and CERHI, UNIBEN

CERHI/UBTH/ACEGID Partnership wins a grant to validate rapid diagnostic test kits for COVID-19



CERHI Lab

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI), University of Benin, established a research consortium with the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) through which they jointly used CERHI's facilities, including a RT-PCR

machine for testing for the virus. The unit was validated by the Nigerian Centre for disease Control (NCDC) on May 10, 2020, and this became the second testing unit in Edo State, and one of the few in the country.

On May 14, 2020, CERHI/UBTH team in collaboration with the African Centre of Excellence in Genomics of Infectious Diseases (ACEGID) in Redeemers University, Ede (which has also gained national and international preeminence in COVID-19 research) responded to a call for the submission of concept papers by the Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC) by submitting a paper titled: "Validation of rapid diagnostic test kits for covid-19 antibodies in Nigerian Samples".



Two weeks later, the concept paper was selected by the NCDC for progression to submission of a full proposal. The research consortium developed and submitted the full proposal on 29th June 2020 and by 14th August 2020, Dr. Chinwe Lucia Ochu, the program officer from the NCDC notified the principal investigator, Professor Friday E. Okonofua, that the full proposal had been selected for funding and implementation. By this approval, the CERHI/UBTH/ACEGID team will be among the 5 teams that will develop & implement a national protocol for the validation of RDT kits for COVID-19 in Nigeria. The projected timeline for completion of the study is four months.

The importance of this project derives from the fact that although there are currently available rapid tests for COVID-19 in Nigeria, none has been validated and approved by NCDC as accurate for testing. This project will contribute to validating some of the available rapid COVID-19 tests, comparing the sensitivities and predictive results obtained with their use with the gold

Standard, the PCR test. If the rapid tests are found to be sensitive and accurate, it will expand access to COVID-19 testing to millions of Nigerians, with implications for the rest of the African region.



CERHI/PCR COVID-19 Test Lab



CERHI supports international training of trainers in Geriatrics workshop at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital



The training programme was jointly sponsored by University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) and the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI), University of Benin, Nigeria. It began on Monday, March 9, 2020, with an opening ceremony and the launch of the Elder Friendly Hospitals Initiative (ELDFRHI). It was a 5-day intensive training for multi-disciplinary professionals including hospital and healthcare administrators, policymakers, doctors, dentists, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, medical social workers, pharmacists, nutritionists, speech therapists, and other persons who work to promote the health and quality of life of older persons.

Our International guest faculty from the Johns Hopkins University, USA, Matthew Mc Nabney MD, and his wife, Laura, were also present at the opening ceremony. Along with 19 other faculty members, the training curriculum was delivered using lectures, debates, role plays and practicums. Daily activities were concluded with workshops that focused on topical concerns in elder care in Africa. Participants were divided into 10 groups for the workshops, which were facilitated by members of faculty. It is worthy to note that the program ran for 5 days and the key discussions were centered on quality healthcare for older persons in developing countries.



A cross-section of some dignitaries with participants.



CERHI leads the University of Benin to win another competitive grant for establishing a Centre of Excellence on sustainable procurement, environmental and social standards



From left to Right: Dr. Mrs. Evelyn Umemezia, Professor Jacob Ehiorobo, Dr. Joshua Attah, Professor Olufemi Adebisi Bamiro, Professor Rashid Adewumi Aderinoye.

The University of Benin is one of the six (6) Federal Universities who recently won the World Bank/NUC grant of over \$10million for the establishment of Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement Project. Beneficiaries were drawn each from the six (6) geopolitical zones of the Country through a very competitive proposal assessed at different level up to the World Bank stage where the University of Benin emerged the winner of the South-South Zone competition. The proposal led by Professor Friday E. Okonofua and other staff of CERHI was submitted in 2019.

The establishment and operation of the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental, and Social Standards Centre of Excellence (SPESSECE) consists of the following sub- components: (i) \$3,000,000.00 funding support to the Centre of Excellence to facilitate project start-up; and ii) \$7,750,000.00 disbursement-linked indicator (DLI)-based support to operate the CEs. The development objective of the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental, and Social Standards Enhancement Project is to develop sustainable capacity in managing procurement, environment, and social standards in the public and private sectors in Nigeria. The six (6) Centres are expected to offer courses in five (5) tracks – short course, certificate course, advance diploma, masters and BSc in Procurement, Environment and Social Standards to meet the manpower deficit in these areas.

The Centre is headed by Dr. (Mrs.) Evelyn Umemezia as the Centre leader and supported by three (3) Deputy Centre Leaders namely: Professor D. C. Oriakhi –Deputy Centre Leader (Procurement Standard), Professor O. C. Izinyon – Deputy Centre Leader (Environmental Standards) and Professor F.E Okonofua – Deputy Centre Leader (Social Standards). Professor Friday Okonofua now oversees CERHI and the SPESSECE as the Coordinator of the World Bank Projects at the University of Benin.



African textbook project (ATPP) awarded to the University of Benin



The University of Benin recently received a grant through a proposal led by Professor Friday E. Okonofua to participate in the African Textbook Partnership Project in collaboration with Imano Portal Ltd, a South African based organization, with funding from Global Affairs Canada. This is an important project and the University of Benin is currently the only Nigerian University enrolled in the project. The aim of the project is to enhance e-learning in African universities and in UNIBEN through the provision of relevant reading textbooks to ALL Departments of the University. As we all know, contemporary and trendy books are not easily accessible for most of the courses offered by the University, and when they are, they can be quite expensive. We strongly believe that this project will open a gateway for all Departments of the University to access relevant textbooks for use by their staff and students and therefore improve the quality of pedagogy and learning in the University. Later in 2021, when the e-books become fully operational, we have been assured that e-journals will also be added as well.

Imano is a web and app based digital platform (portal) that provides access to affordable e-learning materials like textbooks for both lecturers and students. These books will be sourced and paid for by Imano and will be completely free for the University of Benin. Lecturers and students can then access them on their portable devices like android phones and laptops at their own convenience after due completion of the registration process on the portal.

The university has already concluded the preliminary registration process on the portal.

Information on Registration for the African Book project for staff and students of UNIBEN The University of Benin is participating in the African Textbook Partnership Project in collaboration with Global Affairs Canada and Imano, a South African-based enterprise. It is a World Bank assisted project that was attracted to the university through the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovations. The University of Benin is currently the only Nigerian University enrolled in the project thus far.

The aim of this project is to enhance E-learning in African universities and in UNIBEN in particular. We agree that contemporary and trendy books are not easily accessible and when they are, they can be quite expensive.

Imano is a web and app based digital platform (portal) that provides access to affordable E-learning materials like textbooks for both lecturers and students. These books will be sourced and paid for. Lecturers and students can then access them on their portable devices like android phones and laptops at their own convenience after due completion of the registration process on the portal.

The university has already concluded the preliminary registration process on the portal.

In order to achieve this goal, we are requesting that as the HoDs at the University of Benin to inform their staff and students and to collaborate in the following ways:

1. Sensitise the lecturers and students in your department to embrace this opportunity. The lecturers are to register (create individual accounts) on the Imano portal via this link <https://webapp.imanportal.com/> Click on "Sign Up" and fill out the form. Register with your institution (University of Benin) and afterwards wait for approval from the UNIBEN Imano Admin. It takes just a few



- minutes. When students return, they too will register accordingly.
2. You are to appoint one contact person (lecturer) to represent your department in carrying out this task. We require the full name i.e., firstname and surname, Email address and phone number.

He/she will be responsible for collating all requests for learning materials (books) from the department and forward to us. Such requests should clearly state the title/name of book, author, edition, ISBN numbers and other relevant details for sourcing and uploading.

3. Send a comprehensive list of programmes being run in your department stating the name, degree awarded, status (full time/part time) and duration.
4. Send a comprehensive table of all courses being done in each of the programmes – course code, course title, no of credits, level, semester and status (mandatory or not).

Note: Soft copies of the above requests (2, 3 & 4) can also be forwarded to this email address: imanoproject@uniben.edu (This MUST be in EXCEL sheets.)

CERHI LIBRARY AND SERVICES



CERHI Librarian attending to users at the e-Library

The Centre of Excellence in Reproductive health Innovation (CERHI) library through the funding support of the World Bank, was established in 2016 in line with the Centre's mission which is to promote and support teaching, learning, research programmes and other academic activities to its users (students and staff) within the university community. Its primary aim is to collect relevant information resources in print and non-print format in the core areas of discipline run by the Centre which includes Community Health, Health Economics, Nursing, Obstetrics & gynecology. At present, the library is adequately equipped and has been facilitated to subscribe to various electronic databases with which it is able to complement its print collections. This has

apparently impacted the improved quality of research, teaching and learning of staff and students within the community and outside. With the support and intervention world bank and Centre leader, Prof. F.O. Okonofua, CERHI library has received great boost in all aspects to its functions and services to its immediate community and its Library is ranked favourably in the comity of libraries in Nigeria. CERHI library building besides existing facilities has an Electronic library which houses over 40 systems with full internet access, multimedia facilities with uninterrupted power supply for the promotion of a conducive learning and teaching environment.

CERHI library has over 20,000 volumes of book titles in print, 500,000 Electronic book and Journal titles on reproductive health in her collection and offers conducive reading space with state-of-the-art reading tables and chairs for up to 200 users at a time. The library has over 100 computer systems for internet based research and communication, with various scholarly databases fully subscribed to with access to over 1,000,000 E-books and Journals in reproductive health to aid research for its users. The library automation,



Evidence Based Reproductive and Family Health services, digitization is fully in place.

Print resources

CERHI library houses over 3,000 book titles in print in the core areas of discipline which includes, Community health, Health Economics, Nursing and Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Electronic Books and Journals: The library has over 5,000 Electronic books and Journals on reproductive health in her collections which are easily accessed through springer. PDF versions are made available to its users on request. **Electronic Databases:** CERHI library is subscribed to the various databases:

Databases

1. EBSCOHOST
2. JSTOR
3. HINARI
4. SCIENCE DIRECT
5. SPRINGER
6. WILEY



A section of the physical library

Reference Services: This service ensures that users queries are been attended to with swift response at all times. The librarian ensures the continuous work with users to solve academic challenges beginning from locating a material or where to find a particular piece of information within or outside the library.

Reprographic Services: CERHI library offers photocopying services, printing to its users as

materials available in the library and basically for consultation and not for loan.

Circulation Services: This service includes registration of library users in order to gain access to its collections, reserving of materials for users on specific demands. The library ensures only duly registered users are allowed into the library.

Internet Services: CERHI library offers internet services to its users with uninterrupted power supply and a conducive environment for academic research purposes.

Training: The library offers trainings, seminars and workshops on information resources usage and retrieval techniques for students, staff and other researchers within the university community.

Special Services: CERHI library offers data analysis and reporting services through STATA at a subsidized rate to researchers within the university community.

CERHI Events Hall



CERHI has an ultramodern event hall equipped with air conditioner, HD projectors, free Wi-Fi and teleconferencing equipment which can be used for seminars, training, workshops, lectures, short courses and more.



CERHI Guest House



An ultramodern guest house, well-furnished and equipped with comfortable furnishings for visiting faculty and exchange students with a 24/7 power supply and free Wi-Fi is also hosted by CERHI.

CERHI International Hostel



The Centre also has a comfortable and well-furnished accommodation for international students which features uninterrupted power supply alongside free Wi-Fi and comfortable conveniences for students.

CERHI Business Centre Services



The Centre operates business center services for staff and students who intend to typeset, photocopy, scan documents, print on A3 and A4 documents, and spiral binding of project work, laminating and internet services.



STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

JOSEPHINE AIKPITANYI'S PhD JOURNEY



Deciding to pursue a master's in health economics (Reproductive and Child Health) under the auspices of the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI), University of Benin, Nigeria was at best a gamble that I

was at first sceptical to undertake but which turned out to be the best decision I had ever taken in my whole life.

On getting a grant from CERHI to go on an internship to the United Kingdom, I was opportune to work with Sandy Tubeuf, a Professor of Health Economics at the Academic Unit of Health Economics (AUHE), University of Leeds, United Kingdom, who trained me on the art of undertaking an academic research. Here, I will not fail to mention Dr Eze Ukpai, who was the link between CERHI and the University of Leeds. I remain grateful to him for introducing me to Prof. Sandy Tubeuf and for being my guardian while in the UK.

Upon returning from my internship, I was fortunate again to work as a Programs Officer at the Women's Health and Action Research Centre (WHARC), where I had the privilege of working directly with Prof Friday Okonofua. Working on intervention projects to improve maternal and child health at WHARC was a panacea for success because it helped me to see potentials and opportunities in the field of maternal and reproductive health that were worthy of more research. Therefore, when the opportunity came to write a proposal for a scholarship in an area that needed to be improved upon in a developing country, I knew what my focus would be on. I thereafter informed Prof Okonofua of the scholarship application and he gave his consent and support for me to go ahead. This particular scholarship was peculiar as it is a collaboration between the Centre of Excellence in

Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI), University of Benin, Nigeria and the Universite Catholique De Louvain (UCLouvain), Belgium.



With the guidance of both Professors Friday Okonofua and Sandy Tubeuf, the scholarship application was successful, I was offered admission to study for my PhD at the Institute of Health Research at the UCLouvain, and thus began my PhD journey.

Looking back through the past few years, I will say that I am indebted to God for all His Grace and Mercies that He has bestowed upon me. I am grateful to Prof Friday Okonofua for the gift of mentorship and especially for thinking up the CERHI concept that is aimed at building potentials and innovations, especially for students in West Africa and other developing countries. I am grateful to the Head of Department, Dr Clement Ighodaro, and all the lecturers at the Department of Economics, University of Benin, Nigeria for investing in me academically. I am grateful to Miss Vivian Onoh the VERY ACTIVE Program Manager of CERHI for always having a listening ear to students and solving their issues with her ever charming smiles. I am also very grateful to my colleagues and co-PhD students here at the UCLouvain and to all the wonderful people that are helping to make this journey a reality.



Interview with CERHI international student

Ms. Scholastica Eunice Jimu



My name Scholastica Eunice Jimu from Malawi. I have an educational background in diploma of nursing and midwifery as well as Bachelor of Science in Gender and Development. Before coming to Nigeria to pursue my master's program I was working as a project officer in one of the NGO's in my home country Malawi.

Currently, I secured a CERHI scholarship and I am pursuing a Master of Science in Reproductive Health under the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. The program runs for 24 months (May 2019 to May 2021).

I have been having wonderful experience learning at CERHI with sound interactions with lecturers, the availability of Wi-fi services both at the center and the hostel, library equipped books and E-learning library. The hostel has well-conditioned rooms, refrigerators with enough space which enhances student learning process.

At the point of writing, I have completed all my course work and I am working on my project titled **"PREVALENCE AND DETERMINANTS OF CONDOM USE AMONG THE YOUTH IN MALAWI"** with Professor Friday E. Okonofua as my supervisor. It is important to state that this is the first of its kind in my home country Malawi. The Goal of the project is to promote sexual and reproductive health among the youth in Malawi. The results of this study will assist in identifying gaps which will lead to finding possible interventions to address. In addition, the results of the study will add to the body of knowledge, policy formulation and baseline for future interventions.

I am looking forward to bring a lot of impact to my country after completing my program in reproductive health through CERHI, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.



Reports from the Students: Students' Life in CERHI

Set one foot at CERHI and you'll feel it—a vibe that celebrates life, learning, and daily activities that are anything but routine. CERHI offers students unparalleled academic support, enriched activities galore, sports and cultural offerings, wellness and fitness programs, and endless opportunities to explore, engage, and better the community and the world.

CERHI helps students make the most of their experience, bringing together the people, places and programs that support their growth, wellness and success both within and outside of the classroom.



A group photograph of some CERHI Regional students on an Excursion



Pictures of CERHI Regional Students on Excursion



LIST OF CERHI PUBLICATIONS SUBMITTED TO WORLD BANK FOR VERIFICATION [JANUARY 2019-NOVEMBER 2020]

1. Okonofua F, Ntoimo LFC, Ogu R, Galadanci H, Gana M, Adetoye D, et al (2019). Assessing the knowledge and skills on emergency obstetric care among health providers: Implications for health systems strengthening in Nigeria. *PLoS ONE*. Vol. 14, issue 4 <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0213719>
2. Nyengidiki T, Inimgba N, Bassey G, Ogu R. (2019). Does introduction of user fees affect the utilization of cervical cancer screening services in Nigeria? *Nigerian Journal of Clinical Practice*. *Nigerian Journal of Clinical Practice*. Vol. 22, Issue 6 pg 745-749 DOI: 10.4103/njcp.njcp_257_18
3. Ogu, R. N., Maduka, O., Agala, V., Alamina, F., Adebisi, O., Edewor, U., et al (2019). Gestational Diabetes Mellitus Knowledge Among Women of Reproductive Age in Southern Nigeria: Implications for Diabetes Education. *Sage Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272684X19876526>
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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, NIGERIA
SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION INTO POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for admission into the underlisted Postgraduate programmes of the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI), University of Benin leading to the award of Postgraduate Diploma, Masters and Ph.D degrees.

AVAILABLE PROGRAMMES:

DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY

- M.Sc. in Reproductive Health
- Ph.D. in Reproductive Health

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

- M.P.H in Public Health in Reproductive and Family Health
- Ph.D. in Public Health in Reproductive and Family Health

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING SCIENCE

- M.Sc. in Nursing Sciences (Reproductive Health)
- Ph.D. in Nursing Sciences (Reproductive Health)
- MSc in Maternal and Child Health Nursing
- PhD in Maternal and Child Health Nursing

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS

- M.Sc. in Health Economics Reproductive and Child Health
- Ph.D. in Health Economics Reproductive and Child Health

A. GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- I. A Candidate for postgraduate studies in the University of Benin must have obtained at least five (5) credits including Mathematics and English Language in WASC, NECO, GCE (ordinary level or their equivalents).
- II. A holder of a Pass (Degree/Diploma) is not qualified for admission into the postgraduate programme of the University of Benin. In addition, all holders of 3rd class degree must possess PGD to be considered for admission into the Masters programmes.
- III. Candidates who obtained Master's Degree with weighted Average Score (WAS) between 55.0-59% can only be considered for admission into the M.Phil. Programme in the first instance.
- IV. A candidate applying for the Ph.D. in any programme of the University of Benin must have obtained a minimum weighted average score of 60% in the Master's degree



- V. A candidate applying for the Ph.D. with a Master's degree from any other University who in his/her Master's study has not previously taken the compulsory courses or their equivalents similar to the ones in the University of Benin shall, on admission, be required to offer and pass such courses with a minimum of 60%.
- VI. Only students who have the NYSC discharge or exemption certificate can be allowed to clear into the different courses.

Transcripts

Candidates are required to request for their transcript from their previous institution which should be addressed to the Secretary, School of Postgraduate Studies. The transcript is expected to reach the Postgraduate School not later than 8 weeks from the date of the publication. Applications of candidates whose transcripts are not forwarded to the school shall not be processed.

Reports from Referees

Candidates should print out the referee forms provided in the application page, fill and return directly to the Secretary, School of Postgraduate Studies. Applications shall not be processed unless the referee reports are available.

Candidates are to note the following;

- Always check the website for those courses that require written entrance examination.
- Supply a valid e-mail address/telephone during application.

B. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

MSc Reproductive Health

First Degree from a University recognized by the University of Benin in Medicine, Health, Natural and Applied Sciences with a minimum of Second Class Honours.

PhD Reproductive Health

MSc in Health Sciences or MPH from Universities recognized by the University of Benin.

MPH Public Health in Reproductive and Family Health

A First Degree in any Health related Science not below Second Class

PhD in Public Health in Reproductive and Family Health

A Master Degree in Public Health or fields related to reproductive & Family Health

Please Note: (B.Sc.Public Health and B.Sc.Community Health are not acceptable for admission)

MSc Nursing Science (Reproductive Health)

First Degree in Nursing Sciences with a minimum of Second Class.

PhD Nursing Science (Reproductive Health)

MSc Degree in Nursing Science with a weighted score of 60%.

MSc Health Economics

- a). A Postgraduate Diploma in Economics related courses.
- b). A First Degree in Economics and relevant disciplines with a minimum of Second Class Lower Division.



PhD Health Economics

- a) Hold M.Sc. degree (which includes coursework and research) in Health Economics, Health Management/ Administration or Health Policy or in a related area from University of Nigeria or any other recognized University provided the University admission grades requirements of a minimum CPGA of 3.0/4.0 or 3.5/5.0 are satisfied.
- b) In addition, a relevant working experience in Health Management and Policy matters will be an advantage.

METHOD OF APPLICATION: GENERAL

Candidates are to apply online with a valid VERVE OR MASTER DEBIT CARD for the sum of N23, 000.00.

The online application must be correctly filled with all required information before submission, thereafter application and referee forms should be printed out from UNIBEN Website, <http://myuniben.org/>. Any form not properly filled will not be treated.

ADMISSION PROCEDURE:

Only candidate given admission into the programmes are to proceed to pay the total amount of Non-Refundable Acceptance fees itemised below.

Bank/Portal Charges	-	5000.00
Admission clearance	-	23,000.00
ICT Levy	-	6,000.00
Development levy	-	15,000.00
MTN Net Library	-	1,000.00
Total	-	50,000.00

Note: Acceptance fee must be paid before candidates can be cleared.

Signed:
Management