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#### Abstract Details

Title	Sharing Knowledge through Afro-European Medical/Research Public Health Network
Event	Regular Submission-2009 Conference
Submission Program	Regular Abstract Submission
Submission Type	Preformed Panel Abstract
Presentation Format Preferred	Panel
Learning Objectives	By the end of my presentation, it will be demonstrated how members of the Afro-European Medical and Research Network share and exchange public health information/experiences on distance through innovative approaches based on new technologies and communication tools. The importance of partnerships, networks and communities of practice for global health will be highlighted.
Background	The Afro-European Medical and Research Network (AEMRN) is non-governmental and not for profit organization with a strong vision of helping to improve the quality of life for people from low-income countries. AEMRN members strive to contribute to the medical, mental, social, educational and every sound well-being of mankind irrespective of race, creed, beliefs, faith and social affiliation. The public health department headed by Dr. Charles Senessie appreciates the notion that information is inspiring and knowledge is power. Unfortunately the gap in much needed public health information and knowledge between European and Sub-Saharan African countries is appreciably wide. This makes it very difficult for health care providers there to effectively plan and implement sustainable public health programs. Due to these factors, our colleagues become less motivated and migrate to other region or countries mostly with better working environment or conditions creating an acute shortage of health care workers. The Community of AEMRN Networking and Information Sharing Forum was initiated in October 2007 through collaboration with the World Health Organization. The objectives were to: 1) empower public health professionals in middle and low-income countries to interact at various levels; 2) promote exchange of information, knowledge, skills and expertise for the benefit of their local settings through information and communications technology (ICT); and 3) empower AEMRN members to think locally and act globally. With such advanced innovative ICT approaches the public health world fast became a global village. At the moment we have a total of about 176 members from 32 countries on all the continents.
Design/Methods	Forum holds regular discussions, consultations and web conferences on diverse public health topics. Live sessions are recorded and available for follow-up discussion. Surveys to evaluate the program are in progress.
Results/Outcomes	1) Discuss current public health issues with colleagues around the world faster and at little cost. 2) Motivate health workers in the low-income countries and improve their continuous professional development. Internet connection and continuous power supply is pose a great challenge. However, web conferencing is suited for low internet connectivity areas minimizing these. We are also exploring sources of alternative energy (mainly solar etc.,).
Conclusion	Our experience confirms that information sharing through innovative approaches, including South-North and South-South partnerships, can positively impact the public health workforce development in countries with critical shortages of health service providers.
Partners	Knowledge Management for Public Health network (KM4PH), World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA), World Health Organization (WHO), Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA).
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