

Shaping partnerships and kicking off the first PEP projects

The Novo Nordisk Foundation commissioned the **Partnership for Education of health Professionals (PEP)** in 2022 as a flagship programme to reduce global health inequity. The programme aims at improving access to quality prevention and care for diabetes, hypertension and other cardiometabolic diseases for vulnerable populations by equipping health professionals with the required knowledge and skills. By focusing on nurses, PEP will at the same time contribute to the empowerment of female health professionals by providing them with opportunities in education and career development.

Since the inception of PEP, the Novo Nordisk Foundation has built strong partnerships with key institutions in India, Kenya, and Denmark. To date, **PEP has initiated nine scoping projects** that lay the foundation for acceleration and scaled engagement in future.

A central focus in the first PEP projects is on online and blended learning (OBL) as tools to reach more students with high quality education on cardiometabolic diseases (CMD). Starting in India, educational and research institutions have strengthened their capacity and built online learning platforms to enhance the use of blended learning techniques for boosted student engagement.

Already in the first year, **more than 300 faculty staff have participated in a workshop** on online learning working directly on employing innovative educational technologies in their teaching.

The engagement between Indian and Danish institutions with expertise in OBL-facilitated knowledge sharing into educational learning environments and enablers for adopting OBL in routine learning. As a result, all three Indian partner institutions increased their appetite for OBL and are now working dedicatedly towards establishing themselves as centres of excellence for more resource constrained institutions in India.

Recognising the global challenge of health workforce shortages and capacity gaps, **PEP expanded to Kenya in the second half of 2023**. The first three projects in Kenya bring together institutions with comparative expertise in the health professionals education landscape and were successfully launched with the Government in January 2024.



OUR VISION

People living in vulnerable positions in India and East Africa have equitable access to quality prevention of and care for CMDs.



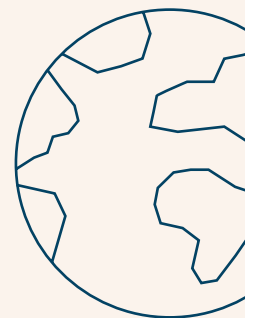
OUR MISSION

Health professionals are equipped to provide quality prevention of and care for CMDs for people living in vulnerable positions, and female health professionals are empowered to prosper in their profession.

9 scoping projects initiated

3 geographies involved

43 DKK million awarded to date for scoping projects



Stronger capacity for health education through online and blended learning in India



Photo: COBL

In India, large-scale use of digital and blended learning tools, new learning resources and new pedagogic approaches has shown great potential in better equipping future and current health professionals to address the rising burden of CMDs and other non-communicable diseases.

In 2023, **PEP has established organisational and digital infrastructure** to strengthen innovation in education of health professionals at three leading Indian universities and education institutions.

Through participatory workshops, trainings and networking sessions, **PEP has contributed to strengthening institutional capacity of Indian educational institutions and their role in providing innovative educational of health professionals on CMDs.** The deployment of digital technologies constitutes a cost-efficient approach to reaching more students and paving the way for more accessible and relevant education to nursing and medical students, as well as to health professionals in service.

In addition to these educational outcomes, **the activities have fostered sustainable international partnerships between the Indian partners and the University of Copenhagen (UCPH) Centre for Online and Blended Learning (COBL)** focused on mutual learning opportunities, with future collaborations as a result (see text box on page 3).

Key achievements in PEP India

2,000 faculty members

have been reached with one or more train-the-trainer activity.

2,000 students

- future and current health professionals - have been reached through one or more trainings;

305 faculty and support staff

have participated in a series of workshops on digital learning

1 Massive Open Online Course

(MOOC) on CMDs was jointly developed by UCPH and CMC focused on the CMC community health model and ready for launch in 2024.

6 educational research

mentorships established and 3 educational research workshops completed;

1 scientific paper

on digital education for health professionals¹ has been published with 10 additional papers in the pipeline



Photo: University of Copenhagen, COBL

Partners in India



PUBLIC
HEALTH
FOUNDATION
of INDIA



Partners in Denmark



VIA University
College

PROFESSIONS-
HØJSKOLEN
ABSALON

KØBENHAVNS
PROFESSIONS
HØJSKOLE

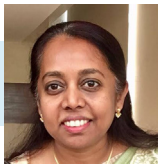
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UNIVERSITY OF
COPENHAGEN



¹Jensen et al. BMC Medical Education (2023) 23:561: Digital education for health professionals in India: a scoping review of the research

Meet a PEP partner



Dr. Rebekah Zechariah | Coordinator, Dept. of Distance Education, Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India

What is your current role in CMC?

I lead the Distance Education Unit at CMC Vellore. Our goal is to reach health professionals who otherwise would not have access to professionally upskilling by taking education to their doorstep! It has been an amazing journey to see how online and blended learning with the support of appropriate technology can reach remote parts of the country. As a woman leader in medical education in India, I feel extremely supported in an institution like CMC Vellore where the focus on training female health professionals was the very reason for which our founder Dr Ida Scudder started the institution.

What is the potential of distance learning education in India?

Blended learning is fairly new in medical education in India, but as a team we believe that this is the way forward for pre- and in-service medical education. The Covid-19 pandemic grounded this reality for the world at large, and we are happy that we were able to support this much-needed education model. In a country like India, using distance education and blended learning programmes for health professions education is the only way to meet the dire need of healthcare professionals being available in places where the need is the greatest.

What are you looking forward to in the PEP programme in the coming years?

Through the PEP programme, it is my hope that there can be a global sharing of knowledge and resources to take education to healthcare professionals at the point of their needs. If we all play a part in bringing equity in healthcare through education and capacity building, health for all can become a reality! I believe the PEP programme can be a significant instrument to bring about this change.

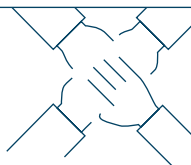
Case examples

PEP supported the upgrading and institutionalisation of the learning management system (LMS) “SARAL” at India’s premier research and teaching hospital, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi. This platform has since been used across all disciplines at AIIMS and is also planned to be hosting digital only courses reaching beyond the institution. AIIMS is thus exploring the potential roll out of SARAL in other national level medical colleges, including the remaining 22 AIIMS-institutions, and other institutes of national importance such as PGIMER, JIPMER and NIMHANS. With this upgrade, the platform can reach 100,000 students.



Photo: University of Copenhagen, COBL

The power of working in partnerships



- The collaboration in the PEP inspired two partners, the Public Health Foundation India (PHFI) and UCPH Department of Public Health, to enter a Memorandum of Understanding to explore future collaborations outside PEP.
- CMC and COBL has become a member of PHFI Advisory Committee for Centre for eLearning.
- The Ministry of Health in Kenya has commissioned a technical working group on improving education of health professionals for Non-communicable diseases established in Kenya in recognition of the importance of PEP



PEP supported Christian Medical College (CMC) in Vellore to upgrade the capacity of its distance learning department in online and blended learning. As a result, hospitals department of endocrinology was able to lead the development and deployment of a structured program for education on Diabetes Footcare Training involving students from CMC itself and more than 29 other mission hospitals.

Launch of PEP in Kenya

2023 marked the expansion of PEP to a second programme country with the initiation of three new projects in Kenya. During exploratory missions, **the PEP team engaged with 40+ stakeholders to gain insights into the health landscape in Kenya** and identify the needs and gaps informing the scope of the PEP programme there.

In the second half of 2023, **PEP facilitated an inclusive process with the six selected partners** and the Kenyan Ministry of Health (MoH) to co-create the three collaborative and interrelated PEP projects. Together, these projects lay the foundation for strengthening the institutional capacity

of medical training colleges to accelerate long-term improvements in pre-service and continuous professional education on CMDs for nurses and clinical officers. **By collaborating with MoH, the programme is anchored in national policy priorities** and promotes the integration of up-to-date CMD educational content into national curricula and teaching guidelines.

Off to good start, the PEP Kenya partners have now started the collaboratively work on developing a comprehensive baseline assessment to identify training needs at MTCs for strengthening the quality of CMD education.



The PEP Kenya programme was launched in January 2024 at Kenya Medical Training College Gatundu, during the NNF's Chairmanship visit to Kenya. **The launch event attracted more than 600 participants**, incl. top leadership from the MoH, underpinning the Kenyan government's support of PEP and its alignment with national health priorities. Other participants included partner organisations, students, patient organisations, and community health promoters.

“The launch of the PEP Programme signals a new era in Kenya’s healthcare sector, with stakeholders committed to working collaboratively towards a healthier and more resilient nation,”

Mary Muthoni Muriuki, PS Public Health and Professional Standards.

Partners in Kenya



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

