

The **Combat Diseases of Poverty Consortium** brings together scientific, academic, NGO and private sector expertise to build educational and research capacities for combating diseases of poverty. The CDPC aims to network researchers across geographical borders and disciplines, in order to foster a scientific exchange and opportunities for new collaborations. The **CDPC newsletter** serves as a platform for the exchange of information between CDPC partners and other interested parties.

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**Welcome** to the fifth edition of the CDPC newsletter! After the summer months, which were in many aspects a quieter time for the CDPC, this newsletter reaches you slightly later than usual. However, our education officer Joe Clowry kept busy during the school break and travelled to Uganda and Tanzania to consult with the local CDPC partners interested in establishing secondary school outreach programmes at their universities. You can find an update on the progress made on page 2. Similarly, Dr. Thomas Strong, Lecturer in Anthropology at NUIM, used the summer months to visit several CDPC partners in South Africa, Kenya and Uganda to discuss his research ideas about living with HIV. His report is featured on page 4. The CDPC training programme is in full swing and we have a report by Dr. Michael Kibe, a recent Kenyan trainee here at NUIM, on page 3. Several other Irish and African trainees have completed or started their training during the summer, so you can look forward to reading about their experiences soon.

The newsletter aims to enhance and facilitate communication within the CDPC, so if you would like to see your research or recent publications featured, **please send me your contribution for the next newsletter by the 30<sup>th</sup> of October!**

*-Dr. Martina Schröder*

### The success of the Butterfly effect

In the last issue of this newsletter we featured the students from St. Peter's College, Dunboyne and Colaiste Bhríde, Carnew, who won First Prize at the 2009 Young Social Innovators (YSI) showcase with their project "The Butterfly Effect". The CDPC's education officer, Joseph Clowry, and Patsy Toland from Self-Help Africa (SHA) had worked with the schools and supported their project. We were thrilled with their success and are now delighted to report that the "Butterfly effect" continues to make ripples. When UN secretary general, Ban Ki-Moon, visited Ireland on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June, a delegation of these students presented the Secretary General with a copy of their book *Twenty Fifteen*. The students, from St. Peter's College and Coláiste Bhríde met with the UN Secretary General in Dublin's Government Buildings with their teachers, Eleanor Lee and Caroline Toole. Also present at the event were Dick Roche, Minister of State for European Affairs, Micheál Martin, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Taoiseach Brian Cowen. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon described Ireland as a 'bridge-builder' and an 'inspiring example at the frontlines of disaster response'. So too are The Young Social Innovators of 2009 an 'inspiring example of how young people engage in development issues'. The CDPC commends these transition year students, who have their fingers firmly on the political and economic pulse as they continue to make their voices heard.



Pictured with the students from St. Peter's College, Dunboyne and Coláiste Bhríde, Carnew are Caroline Toole (second from left); Dick Roche, Minister of State for European Affairs; Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations; Brian Cowen, Taoiseach; Eleanor Lee (second from right) and Micheál Martin, Minister for Foreign Affairs

## Summer seeds: African outreach programme

At the Executive Meeting of the CDPC in Jan 2009, the International Advisory Panel of the CDPC suggested to expand our successful Irish outreach programme into the CDPC's African partner countries, which was widely welcomed and agreed upon. Following this recommendation, the CDPC education officer Joe Clowry, visited Tanzania and Uganda this summer to meet with local CDPC partners and to research the possibilities of piloting development education modules in these African countries. In Uganda, Joe had several very constructive meetings with Kalule John Bosco, a former CDPC trainee, and Dr. Anne Katahoire. They arranged meetings with the Education Department, the School of Graduate Studies, the Department of Veterinary Medicine and the Curriculum Department at Makerere University. In addition, they met with the Coordinator of Secondary Schools in the Ministry of Education, representatives of the Irish Embassy in Kampala and the Deputy Director of the National Curriculum Development Centre. Anne and Bosco are committed to moving the Development Education and Outreach project forward in Uganda and have been instrumental to the progress made. All partners agreed that investing in the embedding of Development Education in the curriculum and the encouragement of scientific research in second level schools makes social and economic sense. The CDPC hope to pilot a development education programme that will inform the review committee of the National Curriculum in Uganda. In addition, Dr. George Nasinyama (Makerere University) is actively engaging partners to develop a Young Scientist competition in Uganda. In Tanzania, the development of a Young Scientist competition was the main focus. Prior to the visit to Tanzania, Dr. Noel Murphy and Joe had met with the Co-founder of the Irish Young Scientist competition, Dr. Tony Scott, to discuss the possibility of introducing the competition in developing countries and to seek approval for using the successful Irish model. Dr. Scott encouraged the efforts of the CDPC to initiate the competition and gave his full approval. Joseph had several meetings with Prof. Eligius Lyamuya from Muhimbili University and Jacqueline Mgumia and Gozibert Kamugisha from Dar Es Salaam University. Meetings were held with the Tanzania Teachers Union, Kivulini, Titus Mteleka, MS-TCDC, Concern Worldwide, Oxfam, Children in Crossfire, the Ministry of Education and potential sponsors of the competition. The CDPC are optimistic that our Tanzanian partners will be able to start their Young Scientist competition in the near future. All in all, this summer has seen the first seeds of an African education outreach programme led by local CDPC partners and we are positive that these will continue to grow and develop into fully-fledged outreach programmes aligned with the local school curriculums and general circumstances.

*—provided by Joseph Clowry*



Dr. Mugimba Kizito, Kalule John Bosco, Joe Clowry, Dr. Samuel Wamala and Dorothy Nampanzira (l-r) at Makerere University



Prof. Eligius Lyamuya, Muhimbili, Ray O Shea, Zantel and Jacqueline Mgumia, Dar Es Salaam University

## CDPC Fruits in Uganda

My name is Kalule John Bosco and, in 2008, I spend three months training with the CDPC in NUI Maynooth, Ireland. Among the many things I did and learnt during my training was the immunology of infectious diseases. Since returning to Uganda, I have started a Master's degree involving research on Salmonella, following the extensive training I received on this topic in Ireland. In Ireland, I also participated in the school outreach programme to different secondary schools. Upon my return to Uganda, I have started to reach out to schools in a fashion similar to that adopted by the CDPC for schools in Ireland. I believe that, in resource-limited countries like Uganda, infectious diseases are best tackled by strategic prevention. The prevalence of HIV in Uganda is currently at 7%, and educating children through school outreach will help to reduce this percentage even further. Other infectious diseases such as malaria and diarrheal conditions are also covered by our outreach efforts here in Uganda. I was very happy that Joe recently visited Makerere University to discuss our efforts and the possibilities to firmly establish an outreach programme in Uganda led by Makerere University. My heartfelt appreciation to CDPC and NUIM.

*-Kalule John Bosco (CDPC UGANDA)*



## Experiences of a Trainee: Kenya-Maynooth

I was a trainee with The Combat of Disease of Poverty Consortium (CDPC) between January and April 2009. The training I had requested from the Consortium was in the field of Bioinformatics. I have had an interest in this subject since 1998 during my first postdoctoral training in Japan. Firstly, I felt that the training was going to be beneficial for my research in comparative and functional genomics in protozoan parasites. Secondly, the Department of Biochemistry, University of Nairobi, where I am working as a lecturer, has recently launched a revised M.Sc. course in Biochemistry, which I am coordinating. Bioinformatics is one of subjects offered in this course, so the CDPC training will help me to devise guidelines for launching this course.

I flew out from Nairobi on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2009 and had a stop-over in Schipol airport. I had to wait several hours for my connecting flight to Dublin, but eventually, I boarded an AerLingus plane to Dublin, narrowly avoiding boarding the plane to Cork which was going at the same time. By then I did not know that Cork and Dublin were many miles apart. Anyway, I arrived safely and in the right place. Despite my valid visa, I was held up at immigration for several minutes and questioned about my reasons for coming to Ireland. Coming out of the customs area I was about to look for a taxi to Maynooth, when thankfully I spotted one that was provided by the CDPC. My arrival in Maynooth was on a cold and windy day, so I was glad to be accommodated in a comfortable and warm house. The next day, I registered at NUIM in order to be able to access the University facilities. In my first week at NUIM I attended the first CDPC executive committee meeting where various issues concerning the structure and future plans of the CDPC were discussed by Irish and East African members of the committee. In February and March, I attended several lectures in Bioinformatics conducted by Dr. Davide Pisani of the Department of Biology, NUIM, as part of the M.Sc. course in Immunology and Global Health. These lectures were a great help in guiding me to set up our own new M.Sc. course in Biochemistry/Bioinformatics at the University of Nairobi. While I was there, I also teamed up with the CDPC education officer, Mr. Joseph Clowry, on several tours to secondary schools to sensitize students and their teachers on diseases of poverty and Global health issues. Our first trip was to a mixed school in Ballymahon, County Longford, where we mentored three groups of high school students participating in the annual BT Young Scientist competition. The second trip was to a girls' school in Kells, county Meath. Here, we conducted a quiz-like seminar on HIV and AIDS to transition students of this school. The third trip was to a mixed school in Kilkenny, where we gave a lecture on HIV and AIDS. This was my first interaction with high school students in a developed country and I was surprised that the majority of them seemed quite ignorant on health issues especially HIV/AIDS despite their exposure to and availability of free information on the internet concerning this disease. The CDPC is clearly doing very valuable work here and I am hoping that CDPC will soon start a similar lecture series in East Africa as discussed during the CDPC executive committee meeting.

In the month of April, I was at the Institute of Immunology, NUIM, where I was mainly searching sequenced protozoan databases for genes of the ATP-binding Cassette (ABC) transporters. The aim for this is to phylogenetically characterize and classify these transporters using bioinformatics tools. All genes for these protozoan transporters have been downloaded from the databases and I am currently working on their phylogenetic analysis.

Also in April, I traveled to Trinity College, Dublin, where I talked to Drs Mario Fares and Aoife McLysaght from the Smurfit Institute of Genetics about molecular evolution and bioinformatics. I also met with Dr. Gianluca Pollastri, University College Dublin (UCD), School of Computer Science and Informatics, who very kindly gave me some powerpoint slides for teaching protein structure prediction. While at UCD, I also visited the very charming Prof. Desmond Higgins (developer of the Clustal Algorithm for sequence alignments), and was able to discuss various issues in Bioinformatics with him and his group. I traveled back to Kenya on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009 after staying in Maynooth for three months. I would like to thank the University of Nairobi, NUIM and all members of the CDPC for making this trip such a success.

-Dr. Michael Kibe



*Dr Michael Kibe is a lecturer in the Department of Biochemistry, School of Medicine at the University of Nairobi, where he teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Michael obtained his Ph.D from Brunel University in Middlesex, U.K., after having completed a Masters at the University of London and an undergraduate degree in Biochemistry/Botany at the University of Nairobi.*

## What is a positive public?

What kind of social future do we imagine for people living with HIV? As enormous resources are devoted to extending the global reach of Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), and as millions of people survive longer, it becomes ever more important to analyze the social ramifications of lifelong treatment for HIV. This summer, I visited South Africa, Kenya, and Uganda to meet with CDPC scholars and other experts to discuss this question. I met with advocates at AIDS service organizations, university researchers, biomedical scientists, NGO administrators, and others; and I here sketch some of what I learned. Below, I have identified three intersecting phenomena where ethnographic analysis may give us clues to emergent futures for people with HIV. Together, these phenomena comprise what I call 'Positive Publics': social spaces in which HIV+ people are reflexively included. Developments in these domains will contribute to the kind of future people with HIV hope, or fear, to inhabit.

### (1) Secondary HIV Prevention

Institutions worldwide, including in east Africa, are placing a renewed emphasis on HIV prevention after years of focus on treatment roll-out. Stakeholders now recognize that people who are already infected with HIV need to be included in prevention efforts and messaging. New 'secondary prevention' initiatives are planned in Kenya, for example, where such programs have become a national priority. Primary HIV prevention efforts often construct the social world -the 'public'- as HIV negative. When I spoke with AIDS advocates in Kenya, they criticized a side-effect of this type of prevention, saying that it alienates people with HIV. They also said it contributes to the stigmatization of sexuality for HIV+ people because it tacitly implies that HIV+ people will no longer have a sex life after they learn of their infection. The omission of people with HIV from prevention education messages is especially glaring for young adults in east Africa who were born with the virus.

### (2) Criminalization of HIV transmission

Discourses of criminalization are gathering steam all over the world. Following the development in 2004 of an 'African Model Law' on criminal HIV transmission, many African governments are implementing new laws. Kenya's 2006 Sexual Offenses Act and its HIV and AIDS Prevention and Control Act both include provisions criminalizing HIV transmission. Many advocates oppose such measures, arguing that they will discourage testing, contribute to anti-HIV stigma, and exacerbate gender inequality by exposing women to criminal prosecutions. I spoke with experts who view such laws as opportunities for politicians to score political points by enacting laws that will never be applied. Indeed, according to my sources, Kenya's statutes are presently in limbo as different administrative units quarrel over jurisdiction. These debates present an opportunity to examine how powerful institutional discourses are constructing a particular kind of 'social space' for people with HIV. While primary HIV prevention often renders people with HIV invisible, laws criminalizing transmission contribute to the idea that people with HIV are threatening.

### (3) Seroconcordant partnerships

Kenya's *Saturday Daily Nation* newspaper includes personal ads, which, these days, are often placed by HIV+ individuals seeking an HIV+ spouse. Ethnographic research elsewhere in Africa shows that ART support groups are frequently viewed as opportunities to meet HIV+ romantic partners. International news agencies circulate stories of arranged marriages between HIV+ men and women. Some public health officials argue that such partnerships will reduce HIV transmission, others disagree. Some advocates view such couplings as self-imposed quarantine. Anecdotal evidence suggests that such partnerships are increasingly common. Yet little is presently known about the reasons why HIV+ persons may seek to couple with other infected individuals. New ethnographic research is required to understand the ways in which these kinds of relationships are occurring and what they mean. I suggest that these relationships present a third prospect, another kind of social future, for people with HIV.

These three areas of observation and analysis break down an enormous question -- what kinds of social futures are emerging for people with HIV? -- to linked 'sites' or 'domains' of investigation. I would be delighted to hear from CDPC affiliates interested in these and related topics.

—Dr. Thomas Strong



*Dr. Thomas Strong is a lecturer in Anthropology at NUI Maynooth. His publications include essays on beliefs about withering male bodies in highland New Guinea, new theories of kinship in anthropology and cultural studies, artificial heart experiments, altruistic blood donations, and blood donor activism.*