

International Impact

Ambassador Dr. Josephine Ojiambo, Kenya

“My experiences at the Hebrew University make me reflect on how far I have come in life — in fact, they motivate me to encourage others to pursue careers in public health,” says Ambassador Dr. Josephine Ojiambo, the Ambassador/Deputy Permanent Representative of the Kenya Mission to the United Nations and a graduate of the 1988/9 international master’s in public health (IMPH) program at the Braun Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Public Health and Community Medicine who was the recipient of a scholarship from MASHAV, Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation.

With her leadership qualities, vast experience and extraordinary range of skills — from research methodology and epidemiology to international public health and community development, and policy advocacy, planning and programming — Ambassador Ojiambo has been a vital asset to Kenya and far beyond. She has played leading roles in women’s organizations, UNICEF and public health NGOs, in particular in areas such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. Ojiambo fondly remembers the “good network of friends” she made in

High-ranking alumni of the Hebrew University’s year-long international programs are working to improve healthcare, agriculture and nutrition in their home countries, while a student from Nepal experiences a newly created international program in community and development studies

By Daniel Avihai-Kremer

Jerusalem. Indeed, she maintains close connections with the Braun School through its collaboration with her as a founder of Maseno University’s School of Public Health and Community Development, which was established with the assistance of the Kenyan government. Now that she is in New York, Ambassador Ojiambo is also involved with the American Friends of Hebrew University and she is a proud life member of the Nassau County Chapter of the Hadassah women’s organization.

Kibrom Tesfasellassie Kidane, Eritrea

“I was my country’s first master’s-level nutritionist, and I work closely with health personnel and community volunteers in the field to reduce mortality rates and improve nutrition

among our children,” says Kibrom Tesfasellassie Kidane, a Pears Scholar (see page 23) on the 2005/6 international master’s program in nutritional sciences at the Hebrew University’s Robert H. Smith Faculty

Ambassador Ojiambo has been a vital asset to Kenya and far beyond

Deputy Permanent Representative of the Kenya Mission to the United Nations and Hebrew University IMPH alumna (1998/9) Ambassador Dr. Josephine Ojiambo in New York



of Agriculture, Food and Environment. Shortly after his return home, Kidane joined UNICEF and, in 2010, was appointed its top-ranking national nutrition specialist.

In a country where malnutrition in children aged under five is estimated at 10-21 percent, Kidane spends much of his time out in the field as he seeks to meet the Millennium Development Goals on reducing mortality rates

and improving nutrition.

“My major responsibilities are to assist

in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a national nutrition program in cooperation with Eritrea’s Ministry of Health.”

His studies at the Hebrew University were undoubtedly helpful. “I often refer to the program’s materials, in particular from the courses on maternal and child nutrition, human nutrition and public health,” says Kidane. “For me, it was all about the best friends, the best moments, the best program.”

Dr. Bhanu Pratap, India

“The IMPH program is highly valued by the International Red Cross movement,” says Dr. Bhanu Pratap, now serving as program support delegate with the local International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) delegation in Sri Lanka.

Pratap — a Legacy Heritage Fund Scholar on the 2006/7 IMPH program — joined the IFRC’s Regional Delegation for South Asia on graduating. He initially served

a formative experience in ‘team work and group dynamics’

as regional senior officer for HIV/AIDS and then received promotions to regional health manager and senior regional health manager. He was posted to Sri Lanka in 2011, tasked with “supporting community development programs, in particular the post-conflict recovery program for internally displaced populations, which includes the creation of owner-driven shelter construction, water and sanitation, healthcare, and sustainable support development.”



IMPH alumnus and Legacy Heritage Fund Scholar (2006/7) Dr. Bhanu Pratap (left) and Red Cross volunteers conduct a field visit to TB patients in India

The IMPH program was a formative experience in “team work and group dynamics that helped me develop as a person and a professional,” says Pratap, now married to fellow IMPH student Tatyana Ten from Uzbekistan. “I can now contribute more to developing community-based approaches that extend beyond public health and affect health overall.”

Marisa Garcia, Philippines

When she left the University of Southern Mindanao (USM) to attend the 2003/4 international master’s program in plant sciences at the Hebrew University’s Robert H. Smith Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Marisa Garcia was

Since its establishment over 40 years ago, the 12-month international master’s in public health (IMPH) program at the Braun Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Public Health and Community Medicine has attracted over 700 students from 90 countries.

Pears Scholar (2005/6) Kibrom Tesfasellassie Kidane during a field visit in Eritrea



Brett Deutsch Photography

International plant sciences program alumna (2003/4) Marisa Garcia (in short-sleeved top) helps Muslim farmers establish fruit orchards in Mindanao

handling small-scale research studies funded by local sources.

Garcia, from the island of Mindanao in the Philippines, had been awarded a scholarship by the Joint Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program. On returning home, she joined the project on Household Enhancement and Livelihood Program for Muslim Communities (HELP MC) in Mindanao, funded by the Department of Agriculture to support the peace process by alleviating poverty through intensified implementation of agricultural technology-based income enhancement measures in fruit, rubber and oil palm production. Then led by Dr. Pablito P. Pamplona, the project is now headed by Garcia who succeeded



him on his retirement in 2007.

“My master’s studies at the Hebrew University qualified me to handle the project,” says Garcia, who also continues to research areas such as organic farming and crop variety trials at the University of

Southern Mindanao’s Agricultural Research Center.

Flaubert Nana Sani, Cameroon

Flaubert Nana Sani’s master’s studies in plant sciences at the Smith Faculty

From Kathmandu to Jerusalem

Sabita Deshemaru’s passion has taken her 4,818 kilometers from her home in Kathmandu, Nepal to Jerusalem. Hers is not the religious passion of the pilgrim, but rather a burning desire to influence and improve people’s lives.

In order to realize this desire, Deshemaru is studying — thanks to a scholarship from a donor in California — in the second cohort of the Hebrew University’s new Glocal community-development master’s program. Overseen by the Faculty of Social Sciences, the program aims to impart expertise in fields relevant to the development of local communities in impoverished regions and create a cadre of qualified professionals to serve effectively

in international NGOs. Offering courses in economics, culture and anthropology, international relations, organizational studies and regional studies — all taught in English — the program comprises four consecutive semesters, with the third devoted to an internship with a local or international NGO.

Deshemaru, 28, is hardly new to the field. After graduating from high school, she volunteered in an HIV program of the United Nations Development Programme in Nepal. Upon completion of her undergraduate degree in sociology and English in Kathmandu, she began working as a program coordinator with the Israeli non-profit organization Tevel b’Tzedek (see page 6) that promotes social and environmental justice worldwide.

She learned about the Glocal program during a visit to Nepal by its internship coordinator and realized that it could provide the academic knowledge and training that she feels she needs to further her personal and career goals. Deshemaru, who has completed coursework for a master’s degree in anthropology in Nepal, hopes that the Glocal program “will improve research abilities, enable me to see the wider picture of development, and develop skills to work in communities.

“I began the program knowing what I would do after completing it,” she says. “I plan to return to Nepal and work with an NGO that empowers women in the fields of education and women’s health in Nepal and throughout Asia. I must do something to improve women’s lives in Asia, and I can start in Nepal.”

Sabita Deshemaru, Mount Scopus campus, Jerusalem



Bruno Chiariti

in 2002/3 as a Coutu Scholar gave him the “knowledge to develop a strategic science-based approach to prioritizing and addressing plant health risks and issues that affect productivity, environmental sustainability and competitiveness of agricultural crops in Africa,” he says.

As assistant to the senior scientific officers in phytopathology and entomology at the Inter-African Phytosanitary

Council of the African Union, Nana Sani is actively

applying that knowledge. Having created a four-year plant health strategic plan, he continues to develop projects that promote effective plant health and quarantine services control systems, and he is preparing a strategic plan for invasive weeds and agricultural pest management and prevention. “We are also encouraging the African Union Commission’s 54 member states to comply with the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures” he says.

“Early on, Israel understood that education is the key to success and that educating and training people who are determined to learn ensures development and progress. This was the lesson learned and taken home.”

Since 1997, nearly 150 students from 90 countries have attended the one-year international master’s programs in plant, nutritional or animal sciences and over 2,000 practitioners from 120 countries have participated in one of over 25 short-term postgraduate programs run by the Division for External Studies at the Robert H. Smith Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

Prof. Cui Fuqiang, China

“I will never forget the IMPH program’s courses in epidemiology and community-oriented primary care,”

says Beijing-based Prof. Cui Fuqiang, deputy director of China’s National Immunization Program, director of the Hepatitis Division of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) and a widely

published research scientist. “I learned so much that helped me develop my

research model when I returned to China.”

The program was an “eye-opening” experience, he says, that “gave me both epidemiology skills and the self-confidence to pursue my career.” Indeed, after graduating in 2004, Fuqiang moved to Beijing to join China CDC. He has published over

30 articles in which he was the first author, been granted over \$3 million in research support and recently received his doctorate from the University of Basel.

As the China CDC field tutor for MPH students, he teaches his students to “follow my experience from Hebrew University — for example, establishing clear definitions for variables and creating a dummy table before embarking on a study.” ■

I learned so much that helped me develop my research model

*Top: Coutu Scholar (2002/3) Flaubert Nana Sani in Cameroon
Below: Beijing-based IMPH alumnus (2003/4) Prof. Cui Fuqiang during a vaccination campaign in Sichuan, China.*

