

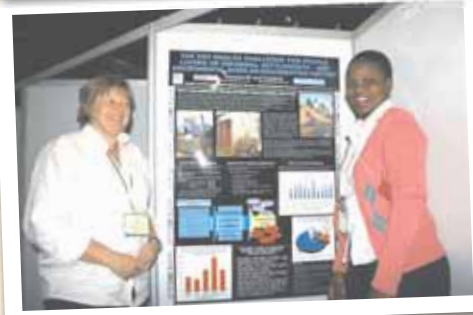
# World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Urban Health



Johburg



Annual Report  
2004-05



## Dedication

The 2004/5 Annual Report of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Urban Health is dedicated to the memory of our dear colleague and friend **Benny Maphaka** who sadly passed away on 24 July 2005.



## Acknowledgements

The work of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Urban Health, and the preparation of this Report, has been made possible by the dedication and contributions from leaders and key staff members of the four core partners of the Centre. They are:

- \* **The South African Medical Research Council**
- \* **The University of Johannesburg**
- \* **The City of Johannesburg**
- \* **The University of the Witwatersrand.**

We would like to express our special thanks to the members of our Advisory Panel (see Annexure 1) whose insights, expertise and experience are invaluable in our ongoing process of reflection, and in forging our future path.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mathee'.

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## Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ALRI	Acute lower respiratory infections
AMAP	Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme
EHO	Environmental health officer
EHP	Environmental health practitioner
CoJ	City of Johannesburg
HECA	Healthy Environments for Children Alliance
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IAP	Indoor air pollution
MMT	Methylcyclopentadienyl manganese tricarbonyl
MRC	South African Medical Research Council
NGO(s)	Non-governmental Organization(s)
PCB	Polychlorinated biphenyl
POPs	Persistent organic pollutants
PTS	Persistent toxic substances
QoL	Quality of life
SPH	School of Public Health
UN	United Nations
UJ	University of Johannesburg
WHO	World Health Organization
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

## Preface

The **World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Urban Health** (the Centre) is founded on a **partnership** involving a research Organization (the South African Medical Research Council), academic and training institutions (the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Johannesburg) and a service provider (the City of Johannesburg). The main goal of the partnership is to improve urban health through the pooling of the experiences and expertise of representatives of the three partners.

The Centre is committed to a **sustainable development model** that encourages **community participation** and addresses **inequities** in access to resources and services. The Centre recognises, as its first priority, the health needs of the most vulnerable, low-income urban populations.

Although located in a **South African** setting, the Centre recognises that similar urban health challenges face many **African** countries, and aims to contribute to finding solutions of relevance to the entire **continent**.

This report outlines the areas of work and achievements of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Urban Health for the period of November 2004 to October 2005.

## Terms of reference

The original terms of reference for the Centre were established jointly in 1995 by the partners in the Centre, and representatives from the World Health Organization's (WHO) Geneva headquarters and the African Regional Office. These terms of reference were reviewed and agreed to by, then South African Minister of Health, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

### **The terms of reference are:**

1. to collaborate with WHO in the development of urban health, environment and sustainable development policy, programmes and projects in the African region, particularly within southern Africa;
2. to facilitate, undertake and participate in the design and conduct of research on health and environment determinants, and their management in human settlements;
3. to collaborate with WHO Environmental Health Centres and WHO Collaborating Centres in the fields of urban health, environment and sustainable development;
4. to collaborate in strengthening technical and scientific collaboration with member states in the WHO African region in the development of capacity building (human resources and institutional development) in the fields of urban health, environment and sustainable development;
5. to collaborate with the WHO in the development and updating of curricula of health and environment-related professionals (including environmental health professionals) to address emerging urban health, environment and sustainable development issues;
6. to contribute to the development of more effective and efficient approaches to the delivery of appropriate services to promote urban health, the environment and sustainable development; and
7. to promote models for integrated and sustainable development, urban health and quality of life, as in the Healthy Cities Project and urban aspects of the Healthy Environments for Children initiative, with special emphasis on inter-sectoral collaboration and health advocacy.

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*Advisory Panel Meeting 2005*

## Introduction

### **This year - 2005 - marks the tenth year of existence of the World Health Organization**

**Collaborating Centre for Urban Health.** Over this period the partnership has grown to its current status as an active entity with ongoing pooling of expertise and experiences towards capacity development, and engagement with long-standing and emerging urban health challenges.

Over the past year, the partnership has continued to thrive in an environment of transformation associated with the transition to democracy in South Africa - the ongoing re-shaping of local government systems in Johannesburg, transformation within the Medical Research Council and the enormous challenge of a merger of two of the Centre's partners.

On 1 January 2005, the Rand Afrikaans University and the Technikon Witwatersrand were officially integrated to form the new University of Johannesburg. The new institution is one of the largest contact universities in South Africa, with nine faculties spread over seven different campuses - including the former Vista University campuses of Soweto and the East Rand. Over 40 000 students are currently registered with the University of Johannesburg.

Professors André Swart and Thea de Wet have been deeply involved with the many challenges of organizational transformation at the new University of Johannesburg. As a consequence of the merger, the number of partners within the Centre has been reduced from five to four.

On 29 June 2005 Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, the South African Minister of Health, appointed Professor Anthony MBewu as the new President of the South African Medical Research Council. Professor MBewu is spearheading a new phase in the transformation of the Medical Research Council to better reflect and respond to health challenges in South Africa. A new organizational structure has been developed for the Medical Research Council, and new appointments at senior and executive levels have been made, and are expected in the near future. A committee, headed by Professor Barry Mendelow, has also been appointed to develop a new research strategy for the Medical Research Council. This is expected to be finalised by December 2005. The final recommendations may hold implications for the research foci and form of some units, groups and centres within the Medical Research Council.



*Prof. Anthony MBewu*

A key focus of the Centre over the past year has been to consolidate the efforts commenced during 2003/4 towards building the partnership. This has been achieved through joint work on key projects such as hosting the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology in Johannesburg. Another important vehicle in this regard, has been the initiation of the Health, Environment & Development (HEAD) Study that builds on the experiences and lessons learned through the Centre's participation in the now finalized Hillbrow Community Partnership for Health Personnel Education.

Work has commenced around the development of an identity and brand for the Centre. A design company was appointed to draft a generic cover, that will henceforth be used on reports and other documentation distributed from the Centre.

This Report will show that the future looks bright for the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Urban Health. Over 14 joint research and other projects are currently underway, supplemented by a wide range of additional initiatives to build capacity in urban health and to exploit the pooled expertise and experience of key individuals in the research, academic and service provision domains.

A strategic planning workshop scheduled for 29 November 2005, will be critical in deciding on the path and priorities for the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Urban health over the next five to ten years. The timing of this workshop is vital. We are commencing the second decade of democracy in South Africa, during which matters of urban renewal and health are to be afforded high priority at a national level, and through NEPAD, at the level of the African continent.