



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

THE ROLE OF ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS IN STRENGTHENING PRIVATE MEDICAL TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

October 2014

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Paul Newall for the Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (SHOPS) project.



Recommended Citation:

Newall, Paul. 2014. *The Role of Alumni Associations in Strengthening Private Medical Training Institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Bethesda, MD: Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector Project, Abt Associates Inc.

Download copies of SHOPS publications at: www.shopsproject.org

Cooperative Agreement: GPO-A-00-09-00007-00

Submitted to: Shyami DeSilva
Bureau of Global Health
Office of HIV/AIDS
United States Agency for International Development



Abt Associates Inc.
4550 Montgomery Avenue, Suite 800 North
Bethesda, MD 20814
Tel: 301.347.5000 Fax: 301.913.9061
www.abtassociates.com

In collaboration with:
Banyan Global • Jhpiego • Marie Stopes International
Monitor Group • O'Hanlon Health Consulting

THE ROLE OF ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS IN STRENGTHENING PRIVATE MEDICAL TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN SUB- SAHARAN AFRICA

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or the United States Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	2
2. Background	4
2.1 Human Resources for Health in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Role of Private Medical Training Institutions	4
2.2 The Role of the SHOPS Project.....	5
2.3 Hubert Kairuki Memorial University.....	5
2.4 The Role of Medical Alumni Associations	5
3. Case Study	7
3.1 Overview of the Development of the HKMU Alumni Association.....	7
3.2 Foundational Principles	7
3.3 University Involvement	8
3.4 Establishment.....	8
3.5 Governance and Management Structures	9
3.6 Alumni Database and Membership.....	10
3.7 Alumni Activities and Strategic Plan	11
4. Challenges and Results	12
Conclusion	13
Annex: Steps to Create an Alumni Association	14

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade there has been a significant growth in private medical training institutions (PMTIs) throughout sub-Saharan Africa as a response to the demand for medical training and supply shortages caused by capacity constraints at public institutions. The growth of these private medical training institutions represent an opportunity to significantly increase the production of health workers, who are needed to stem the loss of medical personnel seeking employment abroad, and to address the many health challenges facing the continent, not least of which is the HIV and AIDS epidemic. However, the growth of PMTIs has not been without its challenges. Many PMTIs do not have access to public funding and struggle to operate viably. Over the past several years, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (SHOPS) project has been working with PMTIs in sub-Saharan Africa to strengthen operations, diversify revenues, and improve viability so that they are able to fully contribute to health workforce development in the countries in which they operate. In working with PMTIs, SHOPS has borrowed strategies used by private, higher education institutions in the United States and elsewhere.

SHOPS has worked with private medical training institutions in sub-Saharan Africa to diversify their revenue streams and increase enrollment, consequently contributing to the sustainable improvement of the health outputs in the respective countries.

The United States has a long history of private education. Typically in the United States, colleges and universities diversify their revenue across different sources, including alumni contributions. For some US-based universities, more than 50 percent of alumni make donations through alumni associations¹. In 2007, four-year, public, higher education institutions participating in an annual survey by the US Council for Aid to Education reported an average total alumni contribution of USD \$7.9 million per institution, with an alumni giving rate of 8.5%.² In addition to revenue diversification, alumni associations and networks assist in the branding of the institution, help in identifying internships and job opportunities for current and graduating students, provide opportunities for professional and social networking for graduates, and assist in new student recruitment.

In the last 15 years, universities in Europe and other parts of the world have adopted the US-based alumni association model in order to realize many of the benefits discussed above for alumni, the institution, and current students. For example, the London School of Economics and

¹Smith-Barrow, D. (2013, September). 10 Colleges Where Most Alumni Give Back. *USNews*. Retrieved from <http://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/the-short-list-college/articles/2013/09/26/10-colleges-where-most-alumni-give-back>

² Stewart, M. (2008). *Revenue Diversification and Sustainability: A Comparison of Trends in Public Higher Education in the UK and US*. New York, New York: Standard & Poor's Performance Evaluation Services. [online]. Available: <http://www.cihe-uk.com/docs/0812SandPHESustainabilityReport.pdf>.

Political Science (LSE) alumni association was established in 2005 and already has over 80 country and special interest groups and contact networks in over 190 countries with more than 120,000 participants. LSE alumni can participate in formal and informal networking opportunities and reunions, act as professional mentors, enjoy unique study opportunities, and receive discounts on academic publications. Similarly, Stellenbosch University in Cape Town, South Africa, engages with more than 120,000 alumni worldwide.

This paper explores the benefits to private medical training institutions in sub-Saharan Africa of creating alumni associations. It also provides practical learning from SHOPS's work in assisting



Hubert Kairuki Memorial University (HKMU) in Tanzania to establish an alumni association. The HKMU alumni association was established in 2012 as part of a SHOPS initiative to assist private medical institutions to enhance their income generating activities and strengthen operations. SHOPS worked with HKMU alumni and the university to establish the association, develop an alumni database and operational guidelines, and recruit alumni members. The process and lessons learned from the experience of creating the HKMU alumni association are presented below. Annex A provides steps for creating an alumni association along with links to additional resources.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND THE ROLE OF PRIVATE MEDICAL TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

According to the Sub-Saharan Medical School Survey (SAMSS), which is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, there were about 168 medical schools in sub-Saharan African countries in 2010, including public, not-for-profit, and commercial institutions. Of the 168 medical schools identified in SAMSS, 58 were established in the 1990s and more than half of them were established in the last decade. Most of these institutions are young, small (based on their enrollment capacity),³ and lack necessary finances for optimal operations. Many of the more successful and established medical institutions are run by the government or faith-based organizations. The SAMSS report indicates a significant increase in enrollment in medical schools in Sub-Saharan African, as well as increased investment in medical education provision.

Despite the increase in medical institutions across sub-Saharan Africa, there are very few physicians in Africa as compared with the rest of the world. It is estimated that from 2000 to 2009, Africa had an average of 2 physicians per 10,000 people. In contrast, Southeast Asia had 5 physicians per 10,000 people, and Europe and North and South America had 33 and 23, respectively. The world average was 14 physicians per 10,000 people.⁴ Further compounding the shortage of physicians in sub-Saharan Africa, 22 percent of medical graduates emigrate from Africa⁵, seeking better opportunities and a less stressful work environment as part of the brain drain that is seriously impacting the delivery of healthcare in some of the world's poorest countries.

PMTIs are a relatively new phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa, appearing first in the 1990s and gaining more momentum over the past decade. PMTIs were established following reforms in education systems in sub-Saharan Africa countries that allow private investments in the education sector. One of the recommendations of the SAMSS report is to recognize and review the growing role of private institutions in medical education.⁶ With improvement in the enrollment and support to the PMTIs, Sub-Saharan Africa would benefit from an increased number of medical graduates to contribute to increased provision of health services.

³ (2011). Medical Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa. *The Lancet*, 377.9771, 1113–1121. [http://doi:10.1016/S0140-6736\(10\)61961-7](http://doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(10)61961-7).

⁴ (2011). Health Situation Analysis in the African Region: Atlas of Health Statistics, 2011. World Health Organization. Regional Office for Africa.

⁵ (2010). The Sub-Saharan African Medical School Study: Data, Observation, and Opportunity. Retrieved from <http://samss.org/samss.upload/documents/126.pdf>

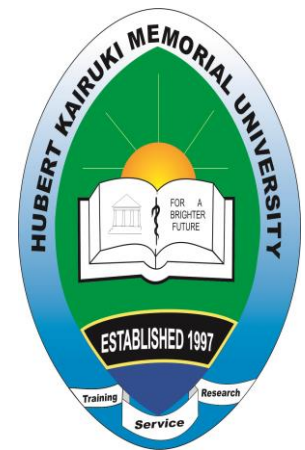
⁶ *Ibid.*,

2.2 THE ROLE OF THE SHOPS PROJECT

The USAID-funded Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector project is a recognized leader in successfully engaging the private sector in developing countries to improve local and national health outcomes. The re-authorization of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) contains ambitious targets to locate and train 140,000 new healthcare workers. Thus USAID's Office of HIV/AIDS (OHA) turned to the SHOPS project to help explore private sector solutions to the great number of healthcare workers that need to be trained. Using its unique perspective, SHOPS has worked to strengthen private medical training institutions in several countries, including Tanzania and Zambia. In Tanzania, SHOPS explored options to improve student financing and worked with several PMTIs, including the Hubert Kairuki Memorial University to diversify revenue, strengthen operations, and improve viability.

2.3 HUBERT KAIRUKI MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Established in 1997, Hubert Kairuki Memorial University is a private chartered and accredited university in Tanzania. HKMU was the first private university to receive accreditation in 2000. As of 2009, the total annual enrollment is 135 with 70 new students admitted per year. HKMU offers the following health sciences programs: Doctor of Medicine, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Diploma in Nursing, Certificate in Holistic Therapeutic Counseling, and Pre-University Entry Program. HKMU also offers postgraduate diplomas in obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics and child health, and master of medicine programs in internal medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, and pediatrics and child health. HKMU is primarily funded through tuition fees, as well as soft loans from the government and administrative funding from Mission Mikochei Hospital. The male-to-female ratio of admitted students is almost one to one. Since its first graduation in 2003, the university has graduated approximately 1,100 students from its various programs.



2.4 THE ROLE OF MEDICAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

While alumni associations are integral to university and college funding in the United States and rapidly gaining prominence throughout Europe, the development of alumni associations is a new concept throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa. This is mainly because higher education in the region has traditionally been the purview of the public sector. Lack of competition reduced the need to establish alumni associations. Currently, most of the active alumni associations in sub-Saharan Africa are for business schools and degrees in economics.

Many medical schools, particularly private medical training institutions, are poorly funded. Formation, promotion, and investment in alumni networks could serve as an important source of revenue generation for these institutions through alumni contributions. In addition, alumni associations would provide a number of added advantages to PMTIs and their alumni.

Alumni associations are typically formed by and for the graduates of an educational institution. These associations serve a number of practical purposes for alumni, including the following:

- Alumni can connect with their classmates, which creates an on-going sense of community.

- Alumni can easily access updates from their university.
- Alumni are able to utilize associations to keep in touch with faculty. Consequently, alumni can stay informed of various developments in their field of study. For PMTIs, this would involve sharing innovations in health care delivery, systems, and technologies.
- Associations assist alumni in keeping in touch and networking with other alumni within the country and across the world. This provides opportunities to share medical advances and learning through peer exchange.
- Associations provide opportunities for professional growth and social interaction.
- Associations provide a mechanism for alumni to participate in university decision-making processes, contribute to the quality of education, and maintain the brand of the university.
- Through associations, alumni can provide direct assistance to current students, primarily through mentoring and internships.

Alumni associations also have various benefits to the institutions. These benefits include the following:

- Alumni associations enhance brand recognition of the institution.
- Alumni associations promote donations to the institution.
- Alumni donations can be an important source of income for universities that allows them to improve institutional facilities and the quality of teaching.
- Alumni donations can also assist institutions in creating scholarship and financial aid programs for students who lack the financial resources to pay for full or partial tuition at the institution.
- Alumni networks can be used to identify and recruit new students for the institution.

In addition, scholarships and financial aid programs create goodwill for institutions, thereby assisting in branding. Current and graduating students can identify job placements and receive career guidance through alumni networks.

3. CASE STUDY

3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HKMU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

In 2012 SHOPS conducted a private health sector assessment in Tanzania at the request of USAID. USAID was interested in better understanding constraints and opportunities to enhance programming by partnering with the private health sector, including private medical training institutions. The assessment found that there are 11 accredited PMTIs in Tanzania, with approximately 6 percent of total medical students enrolled. While PMTIs could potentially play a larger role in pre-service education in Tanzania, they face significant challenges, including over-reliance on tuition fees for revenue and cash flow, insufficient sources of public and private financing for student tuition, weak corporate governance, insufficient numbers of qualified students and available instructors, and limited space and infrastructure for more students. As a result of these findings, SHOPS developed a program to strengthen a select group of PMTIs, including HKMU. SHOPS conducted a collaborative needs assessment with HKMU, exploring opportunities to diversify revenue, increase fund-raising and improve overall capacity. Through this process, SHOPS and HKMU identified the development of an alumni association as a strategic priority for the school. While in the short term the creation of the association would require an investment by HKMU, it had the longer term potential to help engage alumni and provide a source for increased alumni donations.

Over the past two years, SHOPS worked with HKMU to develop and launch the alumni association. This assistance included working with HKMU to form the association, creating an alumni database, enrolling members and developing a strategic plan to guide the association. The process of developing the association is described below.

3.2 FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

As a first step, SHOPS worked with HKMU to identify some foundational principles that would guide the development and operation of the alumni association. These principles were developed based on a literature review of alumni associations and from experience in founding and operating other alumni associations in sub-Saharan Africa. The foundational principles of the HKMU alumni association include the following:

- Act in accordance with the university mission and vision;
- Bear the university name for branding purposes
- Be independently run by alumni
- Subscribe to common objectives with HKMU
- Integrate gender considerations into the association by ensuring that women are being targeted as members and planning special networking and learning events and opportunities for female graduates and students
- Ensure all graduation years are represented in association membership

3.3 UNIVERSITY INVOLVEMENT

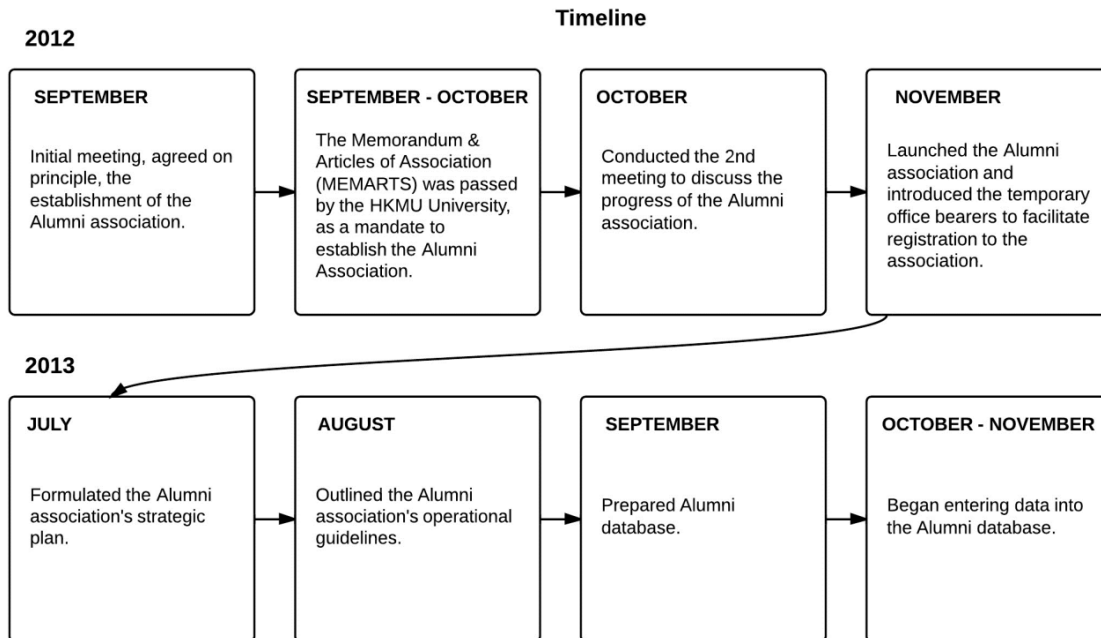
As noted, alumni associations are a fledgling concept in sub-Saharan Africa. PMTIs can play a significant role in supporting and providing favorable and conducive conditions for the development of alumni associations. To assist in the development process, PMTIs should ensure that alumni matters are included in both their established charters and strategic plans, as was the case with HKMU. The university had always planned on creating an alumni association and had included plans for this in the university's strategic plan and charter. HKMU had even tried to establish an alumni association on its own several years before; the attempt failed as the university did not involve alumni in the process. Consequently, HKMU was enthusiastic about revisiting its plans to create an alumni association when SHOPS offered to help. In holding a consultative meeting with the university council, SHOPS linked the concept to the plans in the university's strategic plan and charter to more actively engage alumni, and provided guidance on key principles and best practices in forming and managing an alumni association. To assist in the creation and development of the HKMU Alumni Association, the university provided office space in HKMU's Public Relations Office and provided part-time staff to undertake the alumni activities. In addition, HKMU also offered to host the association's database on its server, with online access through its website.

It is important that alumni associations are formed as early as possible for new institutions. PMTIs should ensure that there is support to establish alumni associations from the inception of the institution. Early establishment of alumni associations will mean that there are clear procedures for engaging alumni after graduation. To assist in early formation of alumni associations, universities can review or adopt the necessary procedures and documentation needed to establish and support alumni institutions. Such documentation should include strategic plans, financial guidelines, a volunteering policy, and guidelines for business transactions of the alumni committees. Sample guidelines developed under the SHOPS project can be accessed from HKMU's website, www.hkmu.ac.tz/alumni. In the case of HKMU, t10 graduating classes had passed through the institution before its alumni association was started. This led to challenges in identifying and tracking alumni, which will be discussed below.

3.4 ESTABLISHMENT

In establishing alumni associations, it is important to identify alumni who will act as champions for the concept. In many cases, champions will be individuals with close ties to the institution or those who are already convinced of the benefits of belonging to an alumni association. The HKMU Alumni Association identified its founding members through the HKMU Facebook account. In 2012, alumni who belonged to the HKMU Facebook group were contacted and asked to participate in an initial brainstorming session on the establishment of the association. Other alumni were contacted through email and SMS. Ten alumni attended this initial meeting. A second meeting was held later in the year and garnered more support, with some alumni traveling from remote locations in Tanzania to attend. Attendees who seemed committed to the concept were targeted for further engagement. Ultimately, many attendees from the two meetings became committed "champions" for the alumni association. Overall, these meetings were important in creating initial involvement of alumni to assist in the establishment of the association, as well as soliciting university commitment.

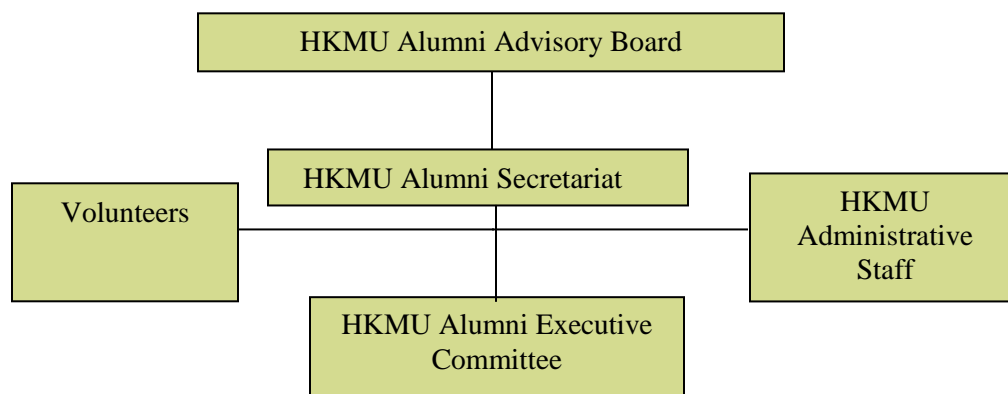
Below is a timeline outlining the HKMU alumni association creation process



Once established, an alumni association should be incorporated as an independent unit of the university or college system, being managed by alumni association members. Alumni associations should operate separately from PMTIs, while assisting in the overall PMTI mission. Typically, universities have two representatives on the alumni association board to advocate for its interests and oversee activities. For example, HKMU is represented in the HKMU Alumni Board.

3.5 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

The HKMU alumni association has a management structure (depicted below) that is standard for most alumni associations. Under this model, the association is governed by the board, which is comprised of founding members of the alumni association and university representatives. Members of the secretariat report to the board and are typically elected. The secretariat formulates strategy to deliver benefits to members. The executive committee reports to the secretariat and is comprised of elected members of the association, namely the chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, deputy secretary and treasurer.



Often, alumni associations are headquartered on the campus of the university. Strong associations will develop a network throughout the country and in cities around the world. Members living abroad have the potential to significantly impact alumni associations and PMTIs by making donations, sharing information on new practices and technologies, and creating linkages to international institutions and opportunities. In these instances, it is important that alumni associations offer activities and events at the regional and international level to maximize alumni participation.

3.6 ALUMNI DATABASE AND MEMBERSHIP

Creation of an alumni database, with up-to-date contact information for all alumni, is integral to the establishment of an alumni association. These databases can be created and maintained through various means, including the alumni student records, university tracer study reports, archival graduation lists, social networks such as LinkedIn, Skype, and Facebook, and the creation of an alumni-based online interactive web portal. Please see the screen shot on this page of the HKMU Alumni Association webpage. In addition to providing information about the association and activities and events, the HKMU portal has a section for online registration and donations.

Another strategy in alumni database creation and maintenance is to contact various medical-related professional associations that can provide lists of their members who are graduates of a given institution. Associations can also utilize university events, such as graduation, anniversaries, and lectures, to ensure that alumni register and update their personal records.



In the case of the HKMU alumni association, the university did not keep updated contact information for its alumni, therefore making it very difficult to contact them. While social media was an effective tool in contacting alumni to help establish the association, it was not effective in encouraging database registration. This may be due to the busy schedules of most medical personnel or the fact that some medical personnel work in rural areas with little or no access to the internet. To circumvent these constraints, the HKMU alumni association is using a “snowballing” approach, in which existing alumni contacts are asked to make referrals, to complete its database. At present, the HKMU alumni database has 460 members with verified valid contact information primarily in the form of email addresses.

The HKMU alumni association is planning to have a tiered membership structure, defined in its articles of association, with standard members (all HKMU graduates and academic staff),

honorary members, and corporate members. Eventually, all alumni will need to subscribe for formal membership. The HKMU alumni association will also introduce an annual membership fee in the future. The membership fee will be linked to the association's strategic plan that outlines expected activities and results of the association. This linkage is particularly important as it will ensure that the association has financial reporting and accountability mechanisms in place and that members understand how their money will be used and how membership will benefit them.

3.7 ALUMNI ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIC PLAN

Once established, alumni associations should develop a strategic plan to outline expected activities and results of the association and chart the way forward. Recently, SHOPS worked with HKMU to develop a three-year strategic plan for the alumni association. The plan is in the process of being reviewed and will be approved shortly. Key issues considered in the HKMU alumni association's strategic plan include the following:

- Create an institutional framework;
- Establish and maintain constant communication and branding of HKMU Alumni Association;
- Promote and enhance the reputation of HKMU;
- Establish support to HKMU;
- Strengthen partnerships.

The strategic plan also outlines planned activities based on the association's priorities. Alumni activities should be organized based on the interest of its members, which can be surveyed during the alumni registration process. Events offer an additional means to recruit new alumni members, encourage networking, and raise funds for the alumni association and the institution. It is also important to integrate alumni activities with university activities. The HKMU alumni association was launched in 2012 and has held one social event to date. The association is planning an annual general meeting and dinner following the next HKMU graduation ceremony and plans to schedule a number of additional events now that the database is more populated.

4. CHALLENGES AND RESULTS

One of the greatest challenges in launching the HKMU alumni association was the creation of the alumni database. HKMU had not kept track of its graduates and did not have current email addresses and mobile phone numbers for its alumni. This challenge reinforces the need to develop alumni institutions as early as possible after the establishment of a PMTI. Another key challenge encountered during the HKMU alumni association development process was lack of commitment of potential members. Because alumni associations are a new concept in sub-Saharan Africa, many potential members did not understand the benefits of membership. This challenge was addressed in the HKMU model through the identification of committed alumni association champions who were influential and recognized the benefits of an alumni association. These individuals effectively assisted in the alumni association start-up process and dedicated time and energy towards the association. Champions could also potentially donate financial resources to assist in the start-up of PMTI alumni associations.

Overall, it is estimated that the HKMU association was able to contact approximately 800 alumni (73 percent of all alumni) through direct emails, SMS, newspaper advertisements, marketing at HKMU graduation ceremonies, and Facebook. Forty-two percent of total HKMU graduates (and 58 percent of those contacted) were entered in the alumni database. Currently, the HKMU Alumni Association has approximately 300 registered members, with a 27 percent membership rate out of all alumni. Members have signed up by completing membership forms at alumni association events or sending an email to the HKMU alumni email address.

CONCLUSION

The HKMU Alumni Association start-up model is one that can be easily replicated across PMTIs in sub-Saharan Africa. Thus far, the HKMU Alumni Association process has yielded a number of lessons learned that could be beneficial in the establishment of alumni associations at other PMTIs in sub-Saharan Africa. It is recommended that private medical training institutions create a platform for alumni associations immediately upon establishment. This includes providing a legal base for an alumni association in the institutional charter, as well as providing financial and infrastructure support (including housing the association on campus) in the formation of an alumni association. Seed capital is important in establishing an alumni institution, and PMTIs should consider it an investment that will yield positive returns in the medium to longer term. Institutional support should continue after the association has been established; for example alumni and university activities should be planned in conjunction with each other. Ultimately, support and collaboration between institutions, alumni, and existing students will be one of the primary drivers in an alumni association's success.

Looking forward, it will be crucial for HKMU and other fledgling alumni associations in sub-Saharan Africa to tap into recent and future graduates for membership. It will also be important for alumni associations to be forward thinking in their implementation. While benefits of an alumni association might not be felt immediately, there is enormous potential. The formation and development of alumni associations should be viewed as a long-term process. First, alumni associations need to achieve their own sustainability, which will primarily be achieved by recruiting members, identifying champions, actively and continuously managing the association, and offering interesting and engaging activities and benefits for members. Although alumni might be hesitant to join in the initial stages of formation, membership numbers should increase as the benefits are more visible. Once alumni associations become sustainable, they will then be able to make financial contributions towards the institution, thus driving the university's own sustainability. Looking beyond financial support, alumni associations have the potential to almost immediately contribute to an institution and its students through non-financial means.

If correctly implemented, alumni associations stand to have a number of benefits for private medical training institutions, their students, and alumni. It is believed that many of these benefits will also serve to strengthen the medical profession in sub-Saharan Africa and contribute to health outcomes across the continent.

ANNEX: STEPS TO CREATE AN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Step 1 – Form an Interest Group

- Meet informally with alumni to obtain names and contact information of potential members and champions
- Use existing alumni networks and contacts
- Obtain a geographic listing of alumni from your headquarters office, if available
- Phone, email, or arrange in-person meetings with alumni
- Directly ask for alumni participation in starting the association

Step 2 – First Communication

- A letter should be mailed (or a message sent) to all alumni in your interest group. This letter should introduce them to the concept, request their contact information, and inquire if they would like to volunteer

Step 3 – Get Organized

A meeting should be convened for interested alumni to agree upon the association's objectives and form a committee. A sample agenda might include the following:

- Call to order
- Introductions
- Review general concepts and goals of the alumni association
- Outline alumni association functions
 - A. Communication (newsletters, mailings, directories, etc.)
 - B. Activities
 - C. Fund-raising
 - D. Scholarships and fellowships
 - E. Assistance in alumni coordinator programming
- Identify short and long term needs
- Establish projected expenditures and dues structure
- Solicit areas of interest and capabilities
- Nomination and election of alumni association officers
- Appointment of a committee to draw up the bylaws or organizational outline
- Appointment of other committees and delegation of responsibilities (communications, recognition, events, recruiting, etc.)
- Set date, time, and location for follow-up meeting
- Adjourn

Step 4 – Prepare Bylaws

Have a committee prepare bylaws for adoption at the next meeting.

Sample Outline of Alumni Association Bylaws:

- Objectives
- Membership
- Officers; duties and powers of officers
- Regular committees; duties and functions of committees
- Meetings and programs; general timing of meetings
- Dues; members to association, control of funds
- Scholarship and fellowship funds, control and operation
- Communication – regular; content and timing of newsletters
- Major activities and work projects; chapter assistance, social functions, traditionally sponsored events

Step 5 – Organize the Follow-up Meeting or Event

An alumni association launch event should be organized. The event should have broad appeal to attract as many alumni as possible, preferably with a senior administrator of the organization in attendance.

- This meeting is crucial. If the alumni can see results, they will continue to serve on the alumni association.
- Other alums and new contacts who could not attend the first meeting should receive invitations for this event.
- The association bylaws should be adopted at this meeting. If the association has numerous chapters, it is important that officers from each chapter attend this meeting.
- The meeting should serve to orientate first-time alumni attendees.

Step 6 – Secure Funding for an Alumni Association

Funding can be a major obstacle for a new alumni association. Generally, finances for an alumni association can be provided in three different ways:

- By an annual dues program for association members
- By contributions received by alumni for a specific association program or activity
- By a combination of the above methods

Other financial considerations:

- Capital fund raising campaigns
- Association sponsored scholarships

Step 7 – Keep in Touch

Communications:

- Newsletters
- Postcards/flyers (to promote special events—ballgames, golf outings, etc.)
- Association directory
- Telephone
- Web: online alumni community, social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter), email blasting

Recordkeeping:

- Keep accurate records
- Maintain a database of alumni names, addresses, contact details, and more
- Take photos of key events and milestones and post these photos on the alumni association website to promote the association and future events

Events:

- Association meetings
- Monthly luncheons/dinners
- Special occasions (Homecoming, Founders Day, etc.)
- Other outings (chapter work day, philanthropies, holiday receptions, etc.)

Content adapted from Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity, and Boston University Office of International Alumni Programs. <http://alumnichannel.com/blog/how-to-create-an-alumni-association/>

Also visit <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/253saf.pdf> for Alumni Association: A Guide for USAID Missions.