

## **African Contributions to Global Health**

### Educators' biographies

#### **How the educators came to study African Contributions to Global Health**

##### **Eric Nébié**



I am Eric Nébié; we will meet in chapter 3.

As a physician specialised in tropical medicine and clinical research, I have had the opportunity to contribute to various clinical trials as an investigator and study coordinator at the Centre de Recherche en Santé de Nouna (CRSN) in Burkina Faso. I witnessed the important successes and challenges faced by African institutions to conduct clinical research activities focusing on their health priorities.

Often perceived only as places for clinical research conduct, African centres were less involved in the research proposal elaboration and played a "secondary role" in these research activities. This landscape has changed, with new approaches to drug development based on strong partnerships and the leadership of African research institutions. For instance, so-called Product Development Partnerships strive to foster drug development for unmet needs, with important contributions from South partners.

Little is known about the success stories of drug discovery and drug development in Africa. For example, the Centre for Drug Discovery H3D in South Africa and the establishment of centres of excellence in clinical research in Africa suggest that a new era is here for clinical research in Africa. Despite the scarcity of resources, the importance of African initiatives and their contributions to knowledge and to generating innovation cannot be overstated. The Global North could benefit from these experiences through a mutual learning process in the field of drug development.

In chapter 3, we will shine a light on these success stories and on the strengths of Africa-driven consortia which accelerate drug development and address global health challenges.



### Akuto Akpedze Konou



I am Akuto Akpedze Konou from Togo. We will meet in chapter 5.

Since I was very young, African culture in general has taught me that it is the elderly who possess knowledge, whether they were able to set foot in a school or not. Knowledge is not always written down, but is mostly transmitted orally. This is why the Malian writer Empaté Bâ said, and I am paraphrasing: "In Africa, an old person who dies is a burning library". It is in this sense that I have always had profound respect and admiration for such people, and talking to them is really rewarding.

In my education, when I went to school, we did not have many references from African intellectuals or scholars, except in a chapter on African literature in high school. It is in my professional life that I discovered the African richness in scientific research and knowledge production, whether in academics or in grey literature.

On this basis, I have been very fortunate to meet many Togolese and African scholars wherever I have gone, on the African, Asian, American and European continents. They have shaped the path of my knowledge gathering, which has made me the person I am today. I wish you many pleasant moments on this journey of sharing African innovation on the beautiful waves of global knowledge!

**Vitor Pessoa Colombo**



I am Vitor Pessoa Colombo; we will meet in chapter 5.

As an urbanist, I find many similarities between African cities and urban areas in my home country, Brazil. Challenges such as socio-spatial segregation, limited access to safe housing and services, as well as environmental hazards are visibly urgent issues across the so-called Global South. This observation immediately triggered a personal interest in expanding my research to the African continent, knowing that there is a lot to be learned in a South-South confrontation of urban development models.

Cities are progressively becoming humans' "natural" habitat, but sometimes to the detriment of our health and social cohesion. Therefore, it is critical to understand how cities impact our well-being, and how urban planning can foster sustainable, inclusive and healthy development. In this sense, African cities can be very interesting case studies: faced with great challenges related to rapid urbanisation, several innovative solutions have risen in different areas, from water distribution systems to data collection methods, as well as planning policies focused on slum-upgrading.

I personally believe that many (if not most) of these experiences could be transposed to other cities in Latin America or South Asia, which have similar socio-spatial dynamics. Surely, there are insightful lessons to be learned from African cities that could benefit the Global South. I am happy to share these thoughts with you in more detail in chapter 5!