



Partnership for Education
of Health Professionals

PEP-UCPH: Strengthening Health Professions Education Institutions in India and Kenya

ACTIVITIES AND LEARNINGS 2025



UNIVERSITY OF
COPENHAGEN



PEP-UCPH: ACTIVITIES AND LEARNINGS 2025

Strengthening health professions education institutions in India and Kenya -
Partnership for Education of Health Professionals at the University of Copenhagen
(PEP-UCPH)

Leadership: Jane Brandt Sørensen (PI), Caroline Clemens Egeland, Anne-Marie
Mosbech Jensen, Lasse X Jensen, Helle Max Martin

Steering group: Mette Ide Davidsen, Jørgen Kurtzhals, Theis Lange, Jens Lundsgaard,
Manisha Nair, Siv Steffen Nygaard, Morten Skovdal

The PEP-UCPH project is a collaboration between the Department of Public Health
and the Centre for Online and Blended Learning

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Patursson Vange, Alexandra Buhl, Helle Max Martin and Jane Brandt Sørensen

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Questions about PEP-UCPH and this report can be addressed to Jane Brandt
Sørensen (janebs@sund.ku.dk)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Project highlights.....	2
Reflections on activities.....	3
PEP Symposium.....	3
Co-creation of CMD course.....	4
Research collaboration.....	5
Communities of Practice.....	6
Webinar series.....	7
Hosting PHFI delegation.....	9
Visits to Kenya.....	10
Feedback Symposium.....	12
Setting the team.....	13
Key learnings.....	14
Looking ahead.....	15

INTRODUCTION

The Partnership for Education of Health Professionals (PEP) is an international capacity strengthening and research project aimed at reducing health inequities by strengthening the education of health professionals in India and East Africa.

Within this framework, the University of Copenhagen (UCPH) has been awarded a grant of DKK 52.9 million under the current phase of the PEP Programme, funded by the Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF). Running from 2025 to 2029, the project focuses on mutual capacity strengthening across a growing number of partners. As such, the project has a dual focus: it aims to develop the capacity of health professions education institutions in India and Kenya to become Centres of Excellence in digital health professions education, while at the same time strengthening UCPH's work in this field. The underlying assumption is that close collaboration and targeted activities will enhance the quality and reach of education in underserved areas, while also advancing research on educational practices and the transition from education to clinical practice. By combining institutional capacity strengthening, digital innovation and research on education, health workforce and capacity strengthening, UCPH's PEP project contributes directly to the programme's overarching goal: to ensure that health professionals are equipped to provide high-quality prevention and care for cardiometabolic diseases (CMDs), thereby reducing inequities in health for vulnerable populations.

This report provides an overview of activities and learnings within the PEP-UCPH project during 2025. As the current project began in early 2025, a significant proportion of our efforts this year focused on initiating research, finalising previous PEP activities, building connections to new PEP partners and hiring and onboarding new staff within the project.

Another component of our work in 2025 has been the creation of a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework for the project. This framework entails a system to collect monitoring results as well as evaluate and learn from the project's activities. The evaluation data will help us to continuously learn from activities and adapt them according to the findings. This report, with its emphasis on reflections and learnings, is a result of these efforts.

Data used in this report has come from various sources, including evaluations by UCPH staff, feedback from event participants through questionnaires and interviews with partner staff. Evaluations and learnings emerging from the PEP-UCPH project thus draw on experiences of the organisers and participants of each activity, with findings triangulated whenever multiple data sources are available.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The PEP-UCPH project saw the initiation of a new phase of activities this year, as well as the continuation of PEP activities from previous years. During 2025 we have:

- Convened over 90 delegates from India, Kenya and Denmark at the PEP Symposium 2025 in Copenhagen.
- Co-developed and launched the MOOC *Tackling Cardiometabolic Diseases – Insights from India* on Coursera in May 2025.
- Co-organised and delivered six webinars in 2025 through the bimonthly series *Innovations in Online and Blended Learning for Health Professions Education*.
- Joined two visits to Kenya involving over 50 Danish and Kenyan stakeholders co-designing the next Kenyan PEP projects.
- Hosted the international research symposium *Feedback in Higher and Professional Education* with 18 leading scholars from Europe, Australia and the UK.
- Continued eight educational research mentorships with Indian PEP partner faculty, with the first manuscripts submitted to journals.
- Hosted a delegation from the Public Health Foundation of India for a capacity strengthening visit in Copenhagen.
- Initiated six Communities of Practice and one Working Group to convene PEP partner staff from multiple institutions around key thematic areas.
- Expanded the PEP-UCPH team significantly, including the recruitment of two PhD students, two postdoctoral researchers, a research assistant and a senior education advisor.
- Established a new Health Workforce research group at the Department of Public Health, meeting bi-weekly and hosting international scholars.
- Secured ethical clearance at UCPH for the full PEP-UCPH research programme and initiated PhD data collection.

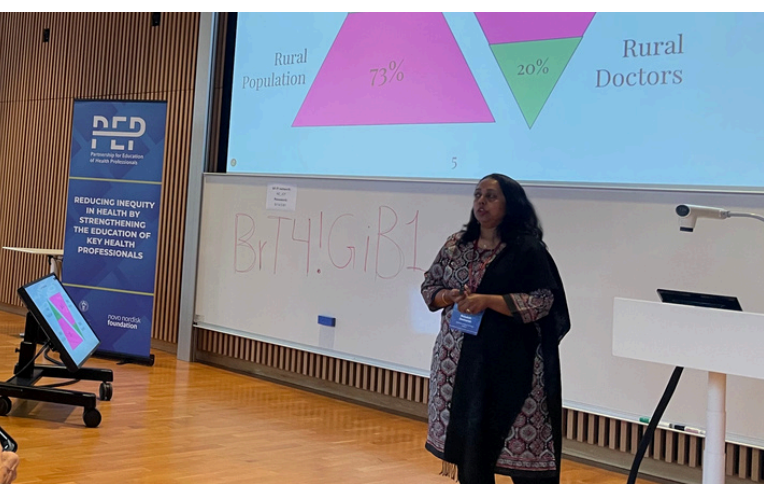
REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

PEP Symposium

The first annual PEP Symposium, held from 28–31 October 2025 in Copenhagen and co-hosted by UCPH and NNF, brought together over 90 participants from institutions in India, Kenya and Denmark. The event focused on strengthening health professions education in a digital world, with a particular emphasis on CMDs and the integration of digital technologies in teaching. Attendees included educators, researchers, policymakers, project managers and health professionals from PEP partner institutions. The main Symposium featured keynote speeches on topical research insights, presentations by selected Indian and Kenyan partner organisations, a panel discussion on the challenges and potentials in the field of health professions education and the initiation of Communities of Practice (CoPs). Pre-Symposium activities saw partner staff visit relevant institutions, such as the Copenhagen Academy for Medical Education and Simulation, the Centre for Online and Blended Learning, the Practice and Innovation House at University College Copenhagen and the Steno Diabetes Centre Copenhagen, offering hands-on insights into Danish healthcare and education systems.

The PEP Symposium was successful in achieving its objectives, particularly in fostering collaboration, showcasing diverse approaches to digital health education and research and initiating the CoPs. Participant evaluations affirmed the event's organisation and relevance, with most rating sessions and pre-Symposium activities as "very good" and noting that the Symposium provided rich learning and networking opportunities.

The presence of representatives from all partner institutions enabled a shift from bilateral to multilateral engagement, enhancing a sense of shared purpose and mutual understanding. Smaller group formats, such as site visits and breakout sessions, were especially effective in building interpersonal connections and facilitating meaningful discussions. Pre-Symposium visits were repeatedly highlighted in feedback from participants as a major strength, offering immersive experiences in simulation-based learning and digital education practices. The success of all programme elements shows that we have a strong capacity to host large and smaller events in an effective and professional manner with positive outcomes. Some potential areas for improvement from feedback sources include allocating even more time for collaboration and CoP discussion; tweaks to the official programme to ensure equitable speaking opportunities; and involving more administrative staff to lighten the significant logistical burden on programme staff.



REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

Co-creation of CMD course

The Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) *Tackling Cardiometabolic Diseases - Insights from India* was co-developed by Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore and UCPH, with media producers from the Centre for Online and Blended Learning (COBL) collaborating with their CMC counterparts. The MOOC aims to share CMC's community-based model for CMD care, providing clinically relevant, research-based knowledge to health workers in underserved and remote areas, whilst strengthening CMC's digital education capacity. Launched in May 2025, it is hosted on Coursera with diverse and engaging weekly modules, including animations, videos, quizzes and discussion prompts. Coursera data shows that the course has already reached hundreds of learners. The current learner profile is 61% male and 39% female, with over 40% between the ages of 25-34. The methods of production were successful in terms of the on-site filming and adaptive planning allowing for rich, context-sensitive content.

Feedback from the organising team members highlight areas where the process could be improved further, particularly around efficiency and team engagement. Earlier clarity and planning could ensure agreement on purposes, timelines, roles and target audiences, as well as local ownership. Both UCPH and CMC staff involved in the production found the MOOC to be relevant and well-aligned to the objectives, supporting CMC's digital education capacity and sharing their community-based model. The final product is an effective, technically polished and informative tool, praised for its educational value and potential for adaptation to other contexts. As an example, the College of Nursing at AIIMS is interested in integrating the MOOC into its curriculum. The collaboration fostered mutual learning and capacity strengthening across institutions, especially in digital production and public health education. CMC's team gained exposure to MOOC development, whilst UCPH staff deepened their understanding of CMDs in LMICs.



REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

Research Collaboration

This past year, our research activities have been a combination of continuing the work from previous PEP phases and initiating the research activities that are envisioned in the grants of other PEP partners.

Research mentorships

Eight educational research mentorships continued into 2025, supporting faculty from PEP partner institutions to conduct small-scale educational research projects initiated during previous PEP activities. The first mentees have now completed their studies and submitted manuscripts to educational research journals, marking an important milestone for the mentorship programme. The remaining mentorships are progressing steadily and are expected to continue into 2026, further strengthening educational research capacity and collaboration across participating institutions. The themes explored centre on different aspects of digital learning and health professions education and are situated in the mentees' own role as teachers. Initially imagined to last for one year, we decided to extend the mentorships to allow for slower progression. This adaptation was crucial for mentees who work full time as faculty staff, providing them time to develop their educational research skills alongside other commitments. New strategies will be found in the coming years to improve the effectiveness and significance of mentorships, preventing them from overloading already busy staff members at partner institutions.

PEP Educational Research Working Group

Following an educational research workshop during the PEP Symposium, an Educational Research Working Group was formed. It currently has a representative from four PEP partner institutions active within educational research. The purpose is to coordinate events and undertake joint activities, for instance, restarting the 2024 webinar series on health professions education (HPE) research. Around the working group will be a larger Educational Research Network for all interested PEP partner staff, and an even larger Educational Research Mailing list (currently 500+ members) which will be used to invite both PEP partners and others working in the field of HPE in LMICs to our open events.

REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

Communities of Practice

During the PEP Symposium, six CoPs were initiated under the themes: *AI in Health Professions Education*; *Health Workforce Research*; *Capacity Strengthening*; *Simulation-Based Education*; *Teacher Competencies in a Digital World*; and *CMDs in the Curriculum*. The CoPs demonstrate a diverse and multidisciplinary composition, with participants representing various institutions, including universities, medical and nursing colleges, ministries of health, NGOs and international organisations across Kenya, India and Denmark.

The initiation of the CoPs within the PEP Symposium was effective in facilitating thematic collaboration and stakeholder engagement. Participants self-selected into CoPs based on interest, fostering ownership and relevance and discussions were structured in a way which enabled groups to define goals, share experiences and co-design future activities. The Define, Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver model from Appreciative Inquiry was used to structure discussions and guide CoP planning, with participants engaging deeply with the themes and sharing diverse country-specific perspectives. The sessions demonstrated high levels of engagement, with diverse representation from PEP partners. All participants responding to the feedback questionnaire highlighted their satisfaction with the CoP sessions for both networking and future collaboration.

All CoPs produced tangible outputs, developing action plans and scheduling follow-up meetings. These plans laid a foundation for future collaboration, indicating a promising start that requires structured follow-up to maintain momentum and ensure long-term impact. Potential spaces for improvement of the initial sessions include reducing time constraints on discussion and planning next steps, clarifying the purpose of some groups, and reaching out to potential CoP members not present at the Symposium. Ensuring CoP ownership immediately after initiation was predictably challenging, but most CoPs have already had their first regular meetings and we are optimistic about how this format for multi-partner collaboration will develop in 2026.



REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

Webinar series

Co-organised by UCPH and CMC as part of the PEP project, the ongoing bimonthly webinar series *Innovations in Online and Blended Learning for Health Professions Education* was launched in May 2024 to support the advancement of medical, nursing and allied health education, particularly in India and other low- and middle-income countries. A Community of Practice has developed around this series, to promote innovative teaching and learning strategies, equipping participants with skills to design engaging online and blended learning experiences.

Since its inception, the series has delivered 10 webinars covering a broad range of pedagogical themes, from creating engaging learning videos and case-based teaching, to leveraging AI in assessments and activating students in both large and online classrooms. Early webinars were primarily faculty sharing inspiring case studies. Later sessions featured learning experts from UCPH and CMC Vellore learning units, bringing additional expertise and perspectives. The series has maintained steady momentum over several months with six webinars conducted in 2025, demonstrating strong engagement and sustainability.

Month	Webinar topic and presenters
January	<i>Communications Skills in Medical Education</i> with Torsten Risør (UCPH) & Sudha Jasmine (CMC)
March	<i>Academic Assessments: The Role of Artificial Intelligence</i> with Ruth Horak (UCPH), Ulla Blomhøj (UCPH), Nicole Schmitt (UCPH) & Arun Zechariah (CMC)
May	<i>Collaborative Learning: Enhancing Teamwork and Group Dynamics</i> with Santosh Mathew (International Christian Medical Dental Association)
July	<i>Optimizing Learning Management System for Effective Blended Learning</i> with Sahaya Anbarasi (CMC) & Arun Zechariah (CMC)
September	<i>Introduction to Developing an Online Learning Module</i> with Anne Kirkegaard (UCPH) & Rebekah Zechariah (CMC)
November	<i>Creating Engaging Learning Videos</i> with Christian Schmidt (UCPH) & Jerome Allan Ebenezer (CMC)

Table 1: Theme and speakers of webinar sessions during 2025

REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

Webinar series cont.

Data from the first four webinars in 2025 shows that most registrants are from India (71.6%), Kenya (22.3%) and Denmark (2.9%). Considering the recent involvement of Kenya in the project, the strong turnout is a positive indicator of engagement. However, although registration is high, ranging from 150 to 252 participants, actual attendance is typically between 33% and 50% of registered participants. This aligns with other webinar series, where people also sign up to be alerted to recordings that they then view at a later point.

Participant feedback indicates that the sessions were generally well-received, although the evaluation responses were low and do not represent the experience of all participants. From the organisers' perspective many aspects worked well, such as the smooth technical facilitation of the webinars. However, potential improvements could include aligning goals between the organisers on topics, improving decision making and communication, reducing the planning complexity and having a catalogue of suitable presenters for each topic.



REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

Hosting PHFI delegation

In March 2025, eight staff members from the PEP partner Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) visited UCPH. The visit aimed to strengthen PHFI's capacity in online and blended learning, share experiences from previous PEP activities and plan for the current grant. Over the course of the week, the delegation participated in knowledge-sharing sessions, media production workshops, meetings on status and opportunities, capacity research sessions and social events. The visit enhanced collaboration between PHFI and UCPH, sharing capacity strengthening principles and mutual learning on online and blended learning methods. Feedback from all participants was overwhelmingly positive. PHFI participants valued the hands-on sessions, and UCPH facilitators noted the positive shift to mutual knowledge exchange.

The organisation of the visit was effective. The programme was tailored to the specific needs of PHFI through pre-visit coordination and thematic alignment, creating a well-balanced agenda catering to both senior management and technical staff. The sessions were effective, with participants having clearly identified profiles, needs and interests. Integrating informal social activities such as dinners and cycling further strengthened interpersonal connections. Experiences and lessons learned from previous PEP activities enhanced the visit's effectiveness, improving session relevance and reducing planning complexity. Minor logistical challenges such as internet connectivity issues and content overlap suggest areas for improvement in the future. Overall, the visit demonstrated our strong capacity for hosting exchange visits and support PEP-UCPH project's strategic goals.

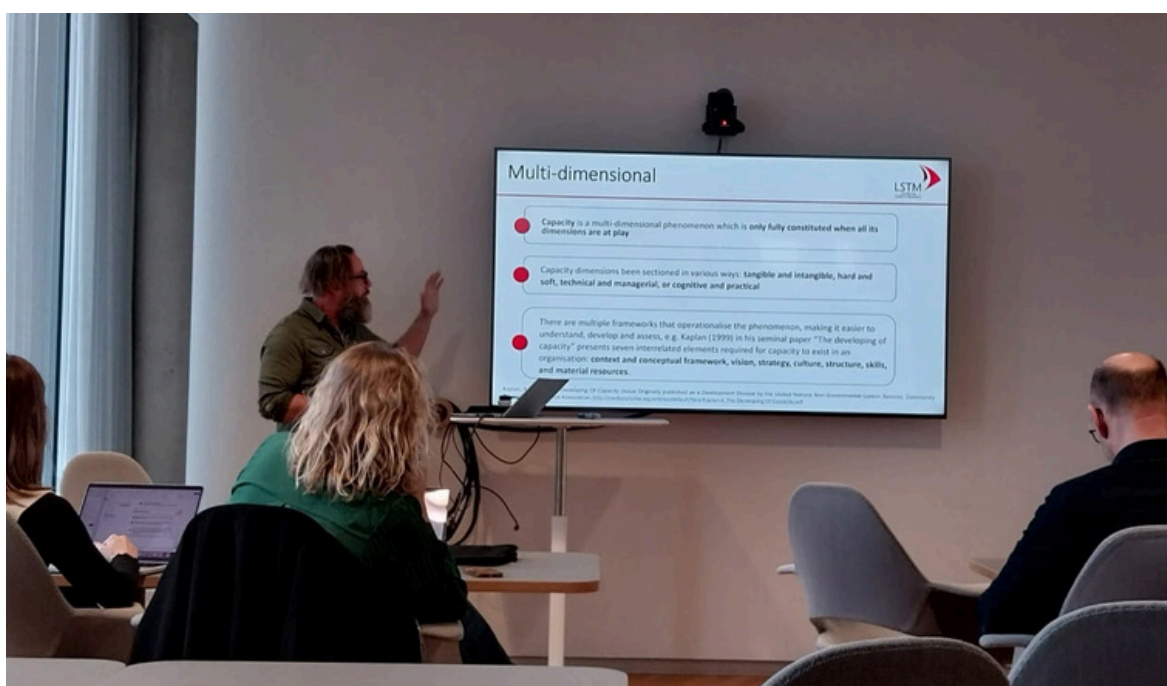


REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

Hosting PHFI delegation cont.

During the visit, we were joined by two representatives from Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine's (LSTM) Centre for Capacity Research for three days, to support the capacity research component. In addition to PHFI and PEP-UCPH participants, colleagues from the Danish University Colleges, NNF and UCPH faculty participated. The aim of the two workshop sessions was to enhance the understanding and practice around capacity strengthening across partner institutions. The sessions introduced core concepts and best practices for capacity research and provided practical support for planning and evaluating capacity strengthening in projects. Both sessions were highly engaging for participants, who applied core capacity strengthening concepts and models to prior and current projects, as well as shared lessons learned from their own projects in plenary.

As world leading researchers on capacity strengthening, LSTM's presence added significant value to the visit, providing foundational knowledge and practical tools for designing, implementing and evaluating capacity strengthening initiatives. The synergy between LSTM and PHFI, along with contributions from other partners and colleagues present, created a rich environment for cross-institutional learning. The visit strengthened collaborative ties and laid the foundations for ongoing joint work, including co-supervision of a PhD student on capacity research within the PEP project. The coordination of LSTM's visit was well-integrated into the broader PHFI programme, allowing for seamless participation by multiple partners and alignment with shared goals, though future visits could benefit from even more structured opportunities for joint planning and follow-up to sustain momentum from the discussions.



REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

Visits to Kenya

Visit to Kenya in February

In February 2025, two representatives of the PEP-UCPH team from the Centre for Online and Blended Learning (COBL) visited Nairobi, Kenya. The visit was centred around the *Cardiometabolic Disease Sensitisation and OBL Blueprint Workshop*, which convened the Kenyan PEP partners and other key stakeholders. The workshop aimed to identify gaps in CMD education and online/blended learning (OBL) among the participating Kenyan institutions in order to strengthen CMD education in middle-level medical training colleges and integrate OBL into health professions education in Kenya. During this visit, our representatives shared experiences with OBL strategies and capacity strengthening.

The UCPH session was well received, and the visit was highly effective and relevant in achieving its intended outcomes. Specifically, it fostered collaboration between UCPH and the Kenyan institutions, providing the opportunity to share meaningful information across participating institutions.

In the preparatory phase, adjustments were required due to unforeseen changes in staffing and late clarification of expectations, limiting the time available for advance planning. Partners identified both challenges (including infrastructure limitations and online engagement of students) as well as promising opportunities for future collaboration. The visit itself was well structured and highly participatory.



REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

Visit to Kenya in April

In April 2025, a delegation of Danish and Kenyan partners involved in PEP convened in Nairobi. The visit brought together over 50 participants from universities, research institutions and health authorities to initiate the collaboration between the PEP partners in Denmark and Kenya. Activities included institutional presentations, thematic workshops and site visits to Amref International University, Kenyatta University and St. Paul's University.

The visit was effective in building a strong foundation to the partnership in PEP, fostering collaboration and information sharing. Participants from both Kenyan and Danish institutions engaged in meaningful discussions around shared challenges and opportunities, particularly around CMD education, faculty development, digital learning and research capacity. Shared challenges included limited infrastructure, high staff turnover and gaps in pedagogical skills. Opportunities which emerged focused on the capacity for collaboration and bidirectional learning. The co-creation workshops and institutional visits enabled partners to identify specific needs and potential areas for collaboration such as AI integration, simulation training and pedagogical support.

The overall structure of the week allowed for a broad overview of the landscape. More opportunities for co-creation and active participation could have made the time more productive. Furthermore, the participation of the donor, at a time when Kenyan university grants had not yet been given, naturally had some influence on the openness of conversations. However, during the visit we experienced a rich and diverse programme of activities. Site visits were found to be particularly valuable, providing context for understanding the varied institutional capacities in Kenya.

REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

Feedback Symposium

In May 2025, we hosted the international research Symposium *Feedback in Higher and Professional Education: Theoretical and Methodological Advances*. It brought together 18 leading scholars from Europe, Australia and the UK to advance research on feedback across higher and professional education. Across two days, participants explored four interconnected themes – conceptual, technological, simulation-based and longitudinal perspectives on feedback – through focused discussions and collaborative sessions. The event strengthened international partnerships among the organising institutions and generated concrete plans for joint publications and future research agendas, including the [Manifesto for Feedback in a Time of Generative AI](#).

To extend the impact, selected delegates also delivered an open hybrid seminar for educational leaders and teaching staff at UCPH and the wider PEP network, sharing current evidence and practices in health professions education. The Symposium was co-funded by a grant from the Carlsberg Foundation, showing our commitment to diversifying sources of external funding to ensure sustainability of educational research activities that are primarily supported by PEP.



REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVITIES

Setting the team

During 2025, the PEP team at UCPH has expanded, welcoming two PhD students, two postdoctoral researchers, a research assistant and a senior education advisor. As these positions were filled, we gained greater capacity to focus on scaling up UCPH's engagement in the PEP partnership. The hiring for other roles – two postdoctoral researchers and a senior faculty member (Associate Professor or Professor) – are still in process, with all three expected to start in the first half of 2026. We experienced some challenges with understaffing in the first half of 2025, partly caused by the unexpected sick leave of a key project lead. This situation was managed by distributing tasks between the remaining team members, temporarily reorganising and expanding the management team.

Establishing a new research group

A new Health Workforce research group was established at the Global Health Section, Department of Public Health, UCPH. The research group meets bi-weekly, consisting of PEP team members working on educational, social science and capacity research. It is also open for other UCPH colleagues to join. The research group has hosted academics working on relevant topics, including Professors Bodil Rasmussen and Margaret Bearman (Deakin University, Australia), Professor Tina Brock (University of Melbourne, Australia), Professor Imelda Bates and Associate Professor Justin Pulford (Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, UK), establishing connections with internationally leading institutions and groups in similar fields.

Furthermore, the research group leads are participating in workshops focused on developing the plans for a health professions education research centre at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, UCPH, demonstrating the group's strong links to research agendas at the University.

PhD students and postdoctoral researchers hired within the research group under PEP have all begun research processes. Ethical clearance for the PEP-UCPH project was submitted and approved at UCPH, ensuring the whole project is ethically sound and enabling the research to begin. Furthermore, one PhD student has applied for ethical clearance at Amref Ethics and Scientific Review Committee to conduct research on nurses' transition from education to practice in two counties of Kenya. The other PhD student began data collection during the PEP Symposium in October as part of a study focused on exploring capacity strengthening and partnerships, using PEP as a case.

We consider the initiation of activities under the PEP-UCPH project in 2025 highly successful and view them as a strong start to the current grant. Together, the expanded PEP-UCPH team and the new research group provide a solid foundation for scaling up both capacity strengthening and research collaboration in 2026.

KEY LEARNINGS

Over the past year, our work has highlighted several areas where our approach has matured and where we can continue to refine how the partnership functions.

Opportunities for multilateral collaboration, whether during events, visits, or informal exchanges, proved especially valuable. These interactions strengthened the partnership, deepened online cooperation, and opened new professional connections, including emerging synergies beyond the PEP project.

We also grew more attentive to the dynamics that come with the international, multi-stakeholder setup. Ensuring balanced collaboration remains essential for mutual learning, and we will keep promoting meaningful contributions from all partners, maintaining open communication with each institution. In some situations, there might also be a need to further clarify the distinct roles of UCPH and NNF.

Across co-creation processes, we saw that dedicating more time to early joint planning helps establish shared goals and ownership, reducing later challenges.

Internally, the expansion of our team has shown the importance of strengthening institutional memory through systematic documentation, regular updates, and more frequent team meetings.

Finally, we recognise the need to diversify research collaboration formats. Tailoring research mentorships and exploring focused exchange visits or co-supervised PhD pathways can better match partners' capacities while supporting deeper engagement.



LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead to 2026, we will continue to implement activities begun in 2025. The effective initiation of the current grant in 2025 means that a solid foundation was established for continued efforts into the second year of the project.

We will further establish and strengthen the educational research area of the project, with three new hires and an expanded research collaboration within and beyond PEP. The CoPs established at the PEP Symposium in 2025 implement workplans and form governance structures to ensure effective and inclusive management across partners. The aim is to create spaces for multilateral collaboration, replacing the primarily bilateral activities of previous PEP phases. After a year of setting the board, 2026 will see the return and scale up of many of the collaborative faculty training activities, both online and onsite. We are excited to see the start of the Kenyan universities' grant period in the first half of 2026, enrolling many future PEP partners into the project.

Collaborative research activities will continue, with one PhD student undertaking research in Kenya and another continuing the research into capacity strengthening through CoPs and the Symposium in 2026. The postdoctoral researchers will also initiate their research in collaboration with partners in Kenya and India. PEP partners will hire their PhD students and postdoctoral researchers, many of whom will be co-supervised by UCPH. Our travel plans early in the year include trips to Jaipur, Delhi and Vellore for partner visits and conferences. Through these visits, we will continue to build connections and collaborations across the partnership.

Finally, 2026 will see the systematic collection of evaluation data in order to monitor and assess the effectiveness of our activities, based on the structured monitoring, evaluation and learning framework and learning culture created in the team. We will use these evaluations and learnings to continuously adapt and improve our activities in close collaboration with partners.





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