

Report by Andrea Solnes Miltenburg, recipient of NRSRGH International Training Grant

### Attendance to **First International Conference 12-14 June 2018, Tanga, Tanzania**

Together with Johanne Sundby and Sara Rivenes-Lafontan I attended the conference in Tanga, Tanzania. The purpose of the conference was ‘connect’, ‘combine’ and ‘create’ with topics of presentations focusing on cooperation in developing Health Services and Learning environment. The conference was organized as a marking of the 10y anniversary of the Tanga International Competence Centre (TICC) that has become a centre for development of health services for the population of Tanga. Norwegian partners and students have played and still do an important role in the building and running of TICC. TICC focuses on intercultural exchange and as well as contributing to sustainable improvements in the surrounding communities.

The conference was structured with 2 keynotes per day and parallel sessions divided in two locations, one focusing on *health*, and the other on *learning*. I participated in the parallel sessions on health. Important reason to join this conference was to have the ability to present about my research, which is situated in Tanzania, within a similar context. The strong connection between Norwegian institutions and TICC, made it an additional interesting conference to attend. The first day the Minister of Health from Tanzania, Mrs. Ummu Mwalimu, presented at the conference. She is from Tanga region and took the opportunity to present some of the government’s challenges, in particular with regards to women, girls and adolescent health. She gave quite a powerful, and personal speech, which was in many ways inspiring.



Although all keynote speakers were wonderful and inspiring, to me two women in particular stood out: Sheila Dinotshe Tlou and Gubela Mji. These two women gave two very different, but equally strong presentations. Both were in a sense critical to the current discourse of ‘development’ and gave some inspiring suggestions how to move from a somewhat neocolonial approach to a true collaborative and transformative approach with respect for indigenous and local knowledge. The parallel sessions were good presentations of both Tanzanian and International researchers of their respective projects. I was thankful for the positive feedback and

questions and it was a good experience to practice presentation skills again.

I was able to talk to the Norwegian ambassador for Tanzania and meet with people from several other health institutions in Norway, for example from Helse Sør-Øst. Because I have not studied in Norway, this was a good opportunity to expand my network, which is of importance for after my PhD.

I would highly recommend other PhD students to find opportunities to present their research at conferences in the countries where their research took place.