

Iddrisu Bukari

2023 Best Thesis Award Recipient

National Taiwan University.

My Academic Journey and Career Transformation in the National Taiwan University

I am delighted and absolutely thrilled to have been nominated the National Taiwan University (NTU) College of Public Health (CPH) Best Thesis Award Recipient for 2023. As a pioneer and first African student in the program to have received this prize, it means everything to me and gives great hope and promises to every young academic that NTU is a university where everything is possible regardless of your background, origin or descent you can achieve anything, if you dreamt it and work hard for it.

This award is a clear testament to me that, NTU is truly a community of diversity, inclusion, opportunities and possibilities. It is a where everyone is welcomed into a fair and harmonious academic environment that challenges best brains and young academics, and helps to unearth their great potentials and builds a solid career and professional network for you globally.

My journey in NTU started in June, 2019, when I gained admission to pursue Master of Science in Global Health. A poor young man practising frontline public health services in a remote district in Ghana and being privileged to have an offer to study in NTU was a very big opportunity, a huge life-change for me and a massive booster to my public health career. The program did not only train me to become a more competent public health practitioner but it built a great foundation in me to take-off a promising in career in public health leadership and widen my professional network all across the world.

When I finally arrived in Taipei in August, 2019, I remember clearly my first day at lectures we already had external professors and resource persons flown from Europe and America to come train us on working with global burden of disease (GBD) indicators and other global health data tools (ANACONDA).

Immediately I finished my course registration, there were already sufficient resources that were made available for me to settle-down and get started. As green and new that I was then, there was adequate provision of support for me to adjust and get about well with my academics and social life. In fact, NTU was a whole experience considering the numerous professional programs, practical trainings, institutional internships, seminars, conferences, field works,

exchange programs, sports, social activities and competitions a blend of all these put together made the academic environment exciting, fun and joyful one.

I normally refer to the NTU as the “*Harvard of Asia*” based on the its academic heights and the high quality of training you receive from the university and also on its own merit being the first Asian University to attain Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) and Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accreditation to train public health practitioners who are co-equals in terms of competencies to their counterparts in the US.

With the strong, renowned and well-experienced faculty in NTU-CPH has an excellent teaching environment with modern facilities, there is no doubt that the NTU is a world-class university that transforms *dreams into reality*. It offers you a great exposure and space to achieve the highest in your professional career dreams.

I graduated as a gallant and proud product of NTU with numerous public health skills and competencies and a wider global perspective on global health policy, health systems administration and leadership. I have all the requisite skillset and professional attitude to lead health organizations anywhere around the world.

As an awardee for this noble prize, I would like to thank Prof. Wei J Chen my academic advisor who was a mentor, father-figure and friend. I taught me so many invaluable skills and academic principles and I forever be thankful to him. I would express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Wan-Ting Huang, co-advisor her strong believe in me and unfailing support. Also I would thank Dr. Hsien Lin program director, Dr. Chwan-Chuen King, Global Health faculty and the administrative staff for their support and guidance.