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2.4 Training Partnership with the National Institute of Public Health, Japan



By the SEAMEO TROPED Regional Centre for Public Health (SEAMEO TROPED/Philippines), Philippines

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Established in 1967, SEAMEO TROPED Philippines, which is based at the College of Public Health at the University of the Philippines in Manila, conducts research and training in the fields of public health, rural medicine, hospital administration, environmental and occupational health, and health policy and management. Email: rcph@seameotropmednetwork.org, directorrcph@seameotropmednetwork.org



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I. Abstract

SEAMEO-TROPED Philippines, the SEAMEO-TROPED Regional Centre for Public Health, Hospital Administration, Environmental and Occupational Health, based in the College of Public Health, at the University of the Philippines, Manila, has enjoyed for the last six years an ongoing partnership with the National Institute of Public Health in Japan to provide training for the Master of Public Health (MPH) qualification.

Graduate students enrolled in the National Institute of Public Health (NIPH) Japan MPH Programme come to CPH-SEAMEO TROPED Philippines for two weeks of field/community survey training and another two weeks of lectures on the control of infectious diseases. They also embark on public health agency visits.

Every year, five-to-seven students attend the field training course and another five-to-seven students attend the infectious disease control course. All overseas students from different countries in the Asia-Pacific region and Oceania are supported by official fellowships: the JICA long-term fellowship; the WHO fellowship; or scholarships. Many course participants are medical doctors, or programme directors from ministries of health. Others are nurses and medical personnel from various medical schools in Japan.

All field survey participants go through a rigorous training programme, at the end of which they present their findings to a panel of faculty members for evaluation of their academic performance. At the end of these two courses, graduate students receive a certificate of training.

II. Project Description

The project involves graduate education/training/development of human resources in the field of public health and has two components:

1. The Field Training Course

The National Institute of Public Health, Japan, under the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare requires the field training course as part of the Master of Public Health degree programme. This is offered as part of the international health course, in cooperation with CPH, which houses SEAMEO TROPMED Philippines.

Students from special fields of public health organize a team to conduct a survey to find ways of solving problems in a practical field of public health.



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4th CPH-NIPH Training Course Field Interview in
Sta. Cruz, Laguna, the Philippines

The trainees learn all, or part of processes, through setting a goal and finding out problems and solutions while developing teamwork, facilitation skills and leadership. Some field survey projects conducted include:

- An assessment of human resource development focusing on training, motivation and the work environment in the Rural Health Units (RHUs), and the City Health Offices (CHOs) in the Philippines.
- An assessment of the effectiveness of training and training needs of midwives in two city health offices.

2. Infectious Disease Control Course

The objective of this course is to provide basic knowledge to both overseas and Japanese students on infectious diseases and control measures. The world of infectious diseases still continues to present a challenge to public health. The programme in the Philippines introduces

the more realistic and practical aspects of infectious disease control that is relevant to the students. This includes understanding infectious diseases and their epidemiology, principles and approaches to surveillance and various control measures, plus understanding health promotion and education in relation to infectious diseases. The course consists of classroom lectures and field visits to observe related medical and research facilities in operation.

III. Significant Impacts

Participants of the last six courses were graduate students of NIPH from Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, Ghana, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tanzania, Vietnam, Zambia.

Once the students had completed the final report of their respective field surveys, this document was sent to agencies where an intensive survey was conducted. The agencies then used the results of the field survey to produce plans and interventions that focus on the findings of the respective studies.

The success of the programme was immeasurable as the graduates gained employment in senior positions in ministries of health across the Asia-Pacific region and further afield, as well as public health positions in other high profile institutions.

Their recruitment is a tribute to the rigorous practical and theoretical nature of the course that has equipped graduates with the skills to make a positive contribution to public health provision in their respective countries.

IV. Success Factors

Both parties, the NIPH Japan and SEAMEO TROPED Philippines-CPH, the organizations official title, were enthusiastic in providing the trainees with the competence they need in order to perform to their maximum effectiveness in public health practice. The coordination of the training programme starts a few months before the trainees are deployed to Manila. This is especially helpful in the development of the project proposal for the community survey. Faculty coordinators are assigned on both sides: from NIPH Japan; and from SEAMEO TROPED Philippines-CPH. This assures adequate guidance to trainees and good outcomes for their chosen projects.

The training also provides expert input from local public health practitioners where surveys are conducted. Support staff that help in translating local dialects during field interviews are especially helpful.

Expectations are clarified before the actual courses start, and trainees are evaluated for their work output. Other faculty members from the college/centre also interact with the participants and help enhance the trainees' perspectives this way. Intercultural activities and sightseeing are also held during these courses to make learning even more interesting.

IV. Lessons Learned and Potential for Project Expansion

Advance preparation for community surveys is crucially important for a successful outcome. This groundwork is necessary and helps to avoid errors and negative experiences, especially in the field. The training course programme is also evaluated periodically and adjustments made in the way the course is run. Focus on lecture content is also adjusted to suit the needs of the trainees, especially in the control and prevention of infectious diseases.

There is still room for the NIPH-CPH/SEAMEO TROPMED Philippines partnership to expand. We can also use it as a model for similar offerings to other Southeast Asian countries and others who may be interested in this type of training for their graduate students. It is also possible to add other specialties, such as environmental and occupational health as part of public health, and also hospital administration.



Photo: SEAMEO TROPMED/Philippines

Participants to the 6th International Health Field Training Course in 2010