

## SPECIAL REPORT\*

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUTRITION TRAINING IN INDONESIA: THE CONTRIBUTION OF SEAMEO TROPMED\*

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### INTRODUCTION

Nutrition problems have been identified in Indonesia since the Dutch colonial time and activities to overcome the problem started with the establishment of the Institute for People's Diet (Instituut Voor Volks Voeding) in 1934 by the Dutch government. Its main tasks were nutrition research, nutrition and dietary survey, nutrition education and providing advice on food and nutrition problems of the indigenous people to the government.

After World War II and the Indonesian Independence in 1945, food crises and starvation with hunger edema were rampant in certain regions of the country, 3-5% children in the community were suffering from third degree protein energy malnutrition (PEM) and such cases could easily be found in hospital wards. The condition occurred during 1950-1965, the stage of development of the country where the intended economic development was dominated by ideological and political conflicts plus fast population growth.

During this period, around 1950, the Institute for People's Diet was transferred to the Ministry of Health, Republic of Indonesia and known as the Lembaga Makanan Rakyat. In response to the nutrition problems at that time, unlike the Institute for People's Diet which concentrated its activities on research and none on human resource development, the Lembaga Makanan Rakyat focused on the latter and on nutrition education in schools, Mother and Child Health Centers as well as key government officials.

In the mid 1960s the Lembaga Makanan Rakyat with its three functions of training, research and program operations was reorganized. It was divided into three interdependent institutions

each holding one function, namely the Academy of Nutrition and School of Assistant Nutritionists for training nutrition manpower, the Center for Research and Development of Nutrition for research and technology, and the Directorate of Nutrition for program operations.

Nutrition manpower development has since been attempted as an important part of the government's efforts to improve the nutritional status of the people.

### UNDERGRADUATE NUTRITION TRAINING

The importance and problem of nutrition manpower training in developing countries was discussed for the first time in an international meeting on Food Habits and Nutrition in Mexico in 1960. The meeting also discussed the need of various levels of training from village level workers to medical and non medical, undergraduate and postgraduate level. It also anticipated the need for building up nutrition as a separate profession, apart from public health.

At that time Indonesia had about a ten years experience of establishing nutrition training programs. In 1950 the Lembaga Makanan Rakyat of the Ministry of Health Republic of Indonesia opened a School for Dietitians which was attended by graduates from the Sekolah Kepandaian Poetri, a high school level institution for improving women's skills. During 1952-1966 this School for Dietitians was developed, in stages, into a BSc level Academy of Nutrition, known as the Akademi Gizi in Jakarta since 1966. The graduates are eligible to work in hospitals or public institutions or regency offices. The Lembaga Makanan Rakyat also started a School of Assistant Nutritionists.

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During the same period nutrition was introduced at University (undergraduate) level; beginning in 1957 the Faculty of Medicine, University of Indonesia followed with the establishment of the first Department of Nutrition in a Faculty of Medicine in 1961. Later on the Institute of Agriculture in Bogor (IPB) offered courses in nutrition, then in 1967 at the Faculty of Public Health, University of Indonesia, and later also at the Teachers College (IKIP) and Faculty of Dentistry, University of Indonesia.

In the meantime nutrition problems continued to have the government's serious attention as reflected in the inclusion of food and nutrition programs in its Five Year Development Plans (Repelita) starting in 1969. In the first and second Five Year Development Plans agricultural development and food production were the main priorities; in the third the coverage of Community Nutrition Programs was expanded to reach  $\pm$  75% of the villages located in the 27 provinces of Indonesia. In the fourth Five Year Development Plan nutrition became part of agriculture, population, rural development and health programs and in the present Five Year Development Plan (1989/1990-1993/1994) nutrition is related to the improvement of the quality of life of the population.

The need for more trained nutrition workers was obvious. To meet the demand for professional nutritionists, in addition to improving the facilities of the existing Academy of Nutrition and School of Assistant Nutritionists in Jakarta, 4 new Academies of Nutrition and 6 Schools of Assistant Nutritionists have been constructed.

In the health sector, besides the professional nutritionists, the medical personnel, in particular the medical doctors, have played an important role in nutrition services. All graduates from the medical faculty (government and private) must serve the government for 3 years and are assigned as heads of the community health centers (Puskemas) located in all provinces. To equip the medical faculty's graduates with nutrition, since the late 1960's it has been compulsory to include nutrition in the undergraduate medical curriculum.

#### POSTGRADUATE NUTRITION TRAINING

The need for training of the trainers in nutrition, particularly at post graduate level, was felt soon

after the establishment of the schools for professional nutritionists and the introduction of nutrition in the undergraduate medical and agricultural training programs.

The first graduates with good academic standing in the schools for professional nutritionists were sent abroad for further study with the main purpose of improving the quality of the teaching staff. Since the mid 1950s, more and more professional nutritionists have acquired Masters and Doctor degrees and are now working mainly at the institutions of the Ministry of Health - the Academy of Nutrition, School of Assistant Nutritionists, the Center of Research and Development of Nutrition and the Directorate of Nutrition.

Likewise attempts have been made to upgrade the qualifications in nutrition of the agricultural and medical manpower. The Agriculture Institute in Bogor and the Faculty of Public Health, University of Indonesia have developed degree programs majoring in nutrition. The Department of Nutrition, Faculty of Medicine, University of Indonesia improved the qualification of its staff by training abroad and at the Faculty of Medicine University of Indonesia itself. More qualified staff were needed when the Faculty of Medicine, University of Indonesia was assigned as the "feeder faculty" to introduce nutrition to other newly opened faculties of medicine (government and private), while scholarships were scarce and facilities for local training limited.

The assignment of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Indonesia as the SEAMEO TROP-MED National Center for regional post graduate training and research in nutrition and food science in 1970 was timely, to support the training of postgraduate level manpower for Indonesia in particular. By allocating part of the training opportunities to staff of Faculties of Medicine, at present almost all Faculties of Medicine have staff members who are the Diploma in Community Nutrition Program's alumni, several are also MSc degree holders and some have established a Department of Nutrition. Besides the medical human resources, the professional nutritionists also were given priority for postgraduate level nutrition training at the SEAMEO TROP-MED Center.

## NUTRITION TRAINING AS PART OF INSTITUTION BUILDING

The SEAMEO TROPMED Center has contributed a lot in developing nutrition manpower at postgraduate level. However, as experience has shown, increasing the number of qualified human resources in isolation has only had a modest impact on the improvement of the nutritional condition of the people. Accordingly the Center has very recently started collaborative work in community nutrition where training of nutrition manpower is offered as part of institutional building. The training package consists of 1) training at the SEAMEO TROPMED Center; 2) follow-up training in the home institution; 3) yearly meeting for exchange of experience with other collaborative centers; 4) provision of training equipment for community nutrition where necessary.

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