

# THE ASIAN CENTER OF INTERNATIONAL PARASITE CONTROL (ACIPAC): FIVE YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT

## II. ACIPAC HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

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### INTRODUCTION

Human resources development (HRD) is the main activity conducted by the Asian Center of International Parasite Control (ACIPAC). To promote a school-based approach to parasite control using children as partners, this concept must be disseminated to and understood by all school health practitioners in the region. For this purpose, program managers of parasite control project were invited to a training course. These participants were from central and provincial levels of the Greater Mekong Sub-region: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam (CLMTV). It was expected that school-based approach could be implemented for parasite control in the region.

### HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE

ACIPAC has provided an HRD program as a package to build up the capacity of personnel who are engaged in school health activities. The training course, organized annually in Bangkok, was coordinated with model school activities undertaken in two provinces in Thailand. A small-scale pilot project (SSPP) was implemented in each

partner country, and a symposium has been organized annually to summarize the cycle of activities. The training course provides a body of knowledge that will enhance the capacity of participants. However, knowledge must be put into practice, and SSPP should provide that opportunity. At the symposium, SSPP implementers and other experts were able to discuss and plan the activities of SSPP so that they could be re-adjusted. After a few years, SSPP will become a model for each country; a model that is based on a country's cultural background and the current situation; a model that can be used as a prototype for a nationwide school-based parasite control program.

There were three levels of training in ACIPAC activities. Health personnel and educators were trained to be project managers of the school-based parasite control projects in the international training course in Bangkok. Teachers were trained to integrate parasite prevention and control with other subjects in school curricula and to promote child-centered education. Children were trained to behave ways that prevent the transmission of parasites and also to deliver information to relatives in the community about how to protect themselves from parasites. HRD in ACIPAC started at the regional center in Bangkok and was replicated many times in the communities of the GMS partner countries. However, within the five-year project, the activities could not cover the total population of the part-

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ner countries. Unless the school health activities are fully and continuously implemented in the region, and parasite control in each country is actively implemented as a national program, the ACIPAC ultimate goal, to reduce the parasite infections to non public health significance will not be fulfilled.

### INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSE

In 2000, the curriculum committee, which consisted of representatives from the Faculties of Tropical Medicine and Public Health of Mahidol University, the Ministry of Public Health (MOH), the Ministry of Education (MOE), and Japanese experts conducted a two-day workshop to discuss about the training course curriculum. The resulting curriculum was used in the first training course, "School-based malaria and soil-transmitted helminthiasis control for program managers," which was conducted annually from 2001-2004. Each year the curriculum was reviewed and modified accordingly. Then, the curriculum underwent major modifications after the 2003 course; the duration of the course was reduced from 12 weeks to six weeks for the last course in 2004.

The first training course was conducted during 17 September to 7 December 2001 in Bangkok, Thailand. This 12-week course was specially designed to train parasite-control program managers to carry out effective projects that use school health as a basis. The course covered: health program management, parasite control methodology, primary health care, health promotion procedures (including health information, education, and communication), and field practice (Figs 1 and 2). The second course, held during 2 September to 22 November 2002, and the third course, held during 7 July to 26 September 2003 were organized with slight modifications based on the first



Fig 1—Field practice.



Fig 2—A practicum during a training course.

course. The final course was conducted during 21 June to 30 July 2004 for 6 weeks (Fig 3). Classroom training was reduced to a minimum,

but relevant subjects remained unchanged. During the training course, the participants had to develop a proposal for a school-based parasite control project that they would like to conduct when they returned home. The proposed project was conducted on small scale such that it could be a pilot project in their respective countries. The project is known in ACIPAC as the Small Scale Pilot Project (SSPP).

Five participants from each country in the GMS-CLMTV were invited through government channels. The participants were expected to be "a team" that would conduct parasite control in their own country using a school-based approach as an entry point into the community. It

was essential, particularly for the first batch, that course participants be nominated according to their actual potential to work on the school-based project, which was developed during the training course, when they returned home after the training. Prior to their nomination, the authorities concerned in the respective governments would have selected a pilot area for the implementation of SSPP. The nominees should work in the selected pilot project, and come from both Ministries of Health and Education.

The four main subjects of the course were (1) general management and project cycle management (PCM), (2) health education and Primary Health Care, (3) parasitology (malaria vector and STH), and (4) epidemiology and biostatistics. Five days of field training in STH control were conducted in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, an endemic area of soil-transmitted helminthiases (STH) in Thailand where ACIPAC Model schools were in full operation. Similarly, ten days of field training in malaria control were arranged at the Rajanagarindra Tropical Disease International Center in Ratchaburi Province, close to the Myanmar border where ACIPAC model activities were carried out in two schools. L



Fig 3–The last training course of ACIPAC was held in June 2004.

Table 1  
Summary list of participants of ACIPAC international training program throughout 2001-2004.

Year	2001			2002			2003			2004			Total		
	MOH	MOE	Total	MOH	MOE	Total	MOH	MOE	Total	MOH	MOE	Total	MOH	MOE	Total
Cambodia	4	1	5	6	0	6	4	1	5	5	1	6	19	3	22
Lao PDR	4	1	5	6	1	7	3	2	5	2	3	5	15	7	22
Myanmar	5	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	5	3	2	5	13	2	15
Thailand	5	0	5	4	2	6	3	2	5	2	3	5	14	7	21
Vietnam	5	0	5	5	1	6	5	0	5	3	1	4	18	2	20
Ghana	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	3
Kenya	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	4	0	4
Timor L'este	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	3	1	0	1	3	1	4
UNICEF Lao <sup>a</sup>	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Subtotal	24	3	27	23	4	27	24	6	30	17	11	28	88	24	112

<sup>a</sup>Attended as an observer for two weeks

lecturers of the training course were invited from the Faculties of Tropical Medicine and Public Health of Mahidol University, from the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, and from the Office of Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education who work in disease control and health promotion. The experiences with parasite control of international organizations, such as WHO, UNICEF, KIA, JAPC and JOICF, were also presented. The private sector was also involved in the training course; lecturers for a project management session were invited from a business consultant company.

Each country in the region uses its own different language and cannot understand each other, except for participants from Lao PDR and Thailand. Therefore, the courses were conducted in English. However, persons from the provinces may not be so competent in English; but, as they are the project implementers, they should be trained. Considering these language limitations, the nominated team from each country should include a leader who is good at both the speaking and writing of English; who can therefore act as the group tutor/interpreter as well as write the pilot project proposal during the course. English language tutorials were also provided for one hour a day, three days a week, for 8 weeks. Although in the last training course participants received a shorter period of English tutoring. A total of 24 hours of comprehensive learning was conducted by an experienced instructor of English language. With the extra-curricular English classes and tutoring support by the team leader, and especially with their hard work, most of participants managed to proceed through the course with success. Computer skills training was also provided for participants, both inside the curriculum of the training course and as an extra-curricular component. During the training, participants from each national group teamed up and formulated a small-scale pilot project that would be implemented in their respective countries.

ACIPAC trained 112 personnel from eight countries in four courses, including one observer from the UNICEF Lao PDR Office, who attended the first training course for two weeks. Besides the GMS-partner countries, participants were also invited from Kenya, Ghana, and Timor

L'este. There were a total of 88 persons from MOHs and 24 persons from MOEs (Table 1). By country, a total of 22 participants attended from Cambodia, 23 participants were from Lao PDR, 15 participants were from Myanmar, and there were 21 Thais, 20 Vietnamese, 3 Ghanaians, and 4 participants from Kenya and Timor L'este. Within the GMS, Lao PDR had the highest number, and Myanmar had least number of personnel trained. The ratio of trained personnel from MOE to MOH was 1 to 3.25. Lao and Thai participants from MOE accounted for seven persons each, but there were only a few persons from other countries.

#### UTILIZATION OF PRODUCTS

The first group who graduated from the training course participated in SSPP in their respective countries. The purpose of including SSPP is to retain trained personnel who work in school-based parasite control programs. In this region, well-trained personnel are scarce, and it is understood that, after having been trained, a number of personnel will move from the government sector to work in international or other institutions that give better career and financial opportunities. However, ACIPAC could not provide SSPP to every group of participants and graduates of the second to fourth groups had a smaller chance of being involved in SSPP activities. If school-based parasite control becomes a national program, then all graduates can be utilized in such programs. However, more personnel may need to be trained, particularly those from MOEs.

According to the results of the terminal evaluation, nearly 90% of graduates were subsequently involved in work related to school-based parasite control. Approximately 38% were involved in SSPP, while 20% were involved in policy making. Other types of work included the management of other related projects: school nutrition promotion, safe water provision, and sanitation improvement. ACIPAC focuses on the human resource development of program managers for parasite control using a school-based approach. Retaining graduates in their jobs would be beneficial for the sustainable implementation of school-based parasite control in the region.