

ROLE OF THE SEAMEO TROPED NETWORK IN HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) is a chartered international organization for the promotion of regional cooperation in education, science, technology and culture. The Regional Tropical Medicine and Public Health Network (TROPED) operates through four specialized Centers in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, with a coordinating unit, the TROPED Central Office in Bangkok, Thailand.

In line with the overall mission of SEAMEO, the role of TROPED is to promote health and to prevent or control disease, thus improving the quality of life of people in the Asia-Pacific Region. Toward this end, SEAMEO TROPED serves to facilitate the strengthening of national and institutional capabilities in research and training through postgraduate academic programs; short-term training courses; scientific fora; publications and information dissemination and as such, has been in the mainstream of health human resources development since its inception in 1967.

To date, a total of 3,353 TROPED alumni have benefited from training in 26 regular course offerings; of these, 1,596 were females and 1,757, males. From 1991 to 1995, a total of 434 key health personnel have attended short-term training courses, with increasing attendance from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam. TROPED's effectiveness comes from the collective strength of and the spirit of cooperation among its host institutions and partners.

Faced with a health scenario of both developing and developed economies, SEAMEO TROPED aims to further its role as an international forum for health development thus, addressing the need for effective strategies for health sector reform and advocacy of relevant health, environmental and development policies through its various programs and activities.

Preamble:

"We, the Peoples of Southeast Asia,

DESIROUS of attaining the benefits of peace, prosperity and security through an enlightened citizenry,

RECOGNIZING the forces and the challenge of change in the contemporary world,

ANXIOUS to provide for constructive direction to these forces of change, and

RESOLVED upon joint and cooperative efforts for regional educational development,

HAVE, through our Governments, adopted hereby this Charter of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization."

Signed in Singapore on February 7, 1968 by the original Member States - Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and the Republic of Vietnam.

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), founded in 1965, is a chartered international organization for the promotion of regional cooperation in education, science, technology and culture.

Member States are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Associate Members are Australia, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand and The Netherlands.

The Council of Ministers representing the aforementioned countries is called SEAMEC. SEAMEO's executory functions are performed by the Secretariat (SEAMES) located in Bangkok, Thailand.

The SEAMEO TROPED NETWORK is one of 9 administrative units under SEAMEO, known as SEAMEO Centers with specialties in tropical

biology (**BIOTROP** in Indonesia); Educational Innovation and Technology (**INNOTECH** in the Philippines); Science and Mathematics (**RECSAM** in Malaysia); Language (**RELC** in Singapore); Higher Education (**RIHED** in Thailand); Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (**SEARCA** in the Philippines); Archeology and Fine Arts (**SPAFA** in Thailand); and Vocational and Technical Education (**VOCTECH** in Brunei Darussalam) (Fig 1).

in Bangkok, Thailand (Fig 2).

SEAMEO TROPMED serves to facilitate the strengthening of national and institutional capabilities in research and training through postgraduate academic programs; workshops, seminars, and technical meetings; multisectoral and multidisciplinary linkages; personnel exchanges; technical consultant services; publications and information dissemination.

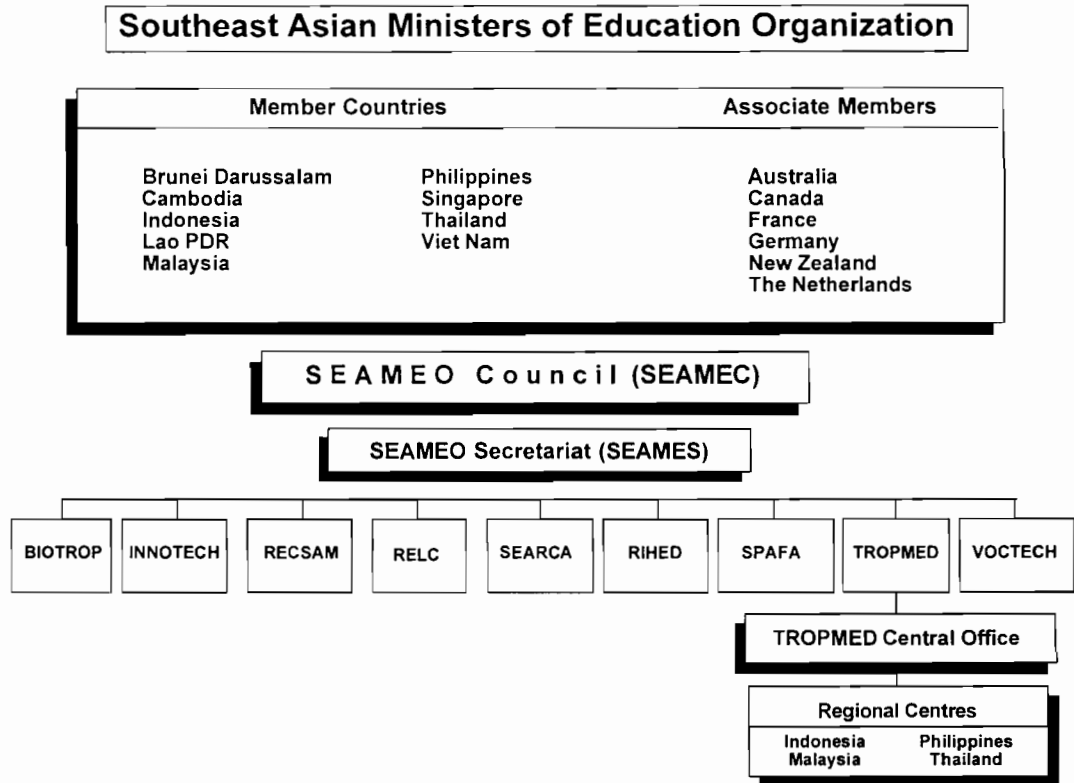


Fig 1—Organization structure of SEAMEO.

The SEAMEO TROPMED Network and SEAMEO Centers each has a **Governing Board** consisting of representatives from Member Countries and which is responsible for operational policies, program quality and evaluation of the unit.

SEAMEO TROPMED operates as a **Network in Tropical Medicine and Public Health** through four **TROPMED Regional Centers** in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand, with a coordinating unit, the **TROPMED Central Office**

ANTECEDENTS

At an initial meeting of the Ministers of Education of Member States with Mr Eugene R. Black of USAID at the Thai Ministry of Education on November 30, 1965, it was agreed that steps should be taken to promote regional cooperation in education. The following year a Task Force¹ of eight members was sent on a mission to Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam to assess the needs and po-

SOUTHEAST ASIAN MINISTERS OF EDUCATION ORGANIZATION (SEAMEO)
REGIONAL TROPICAL MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH NETWORK (TROPMED)

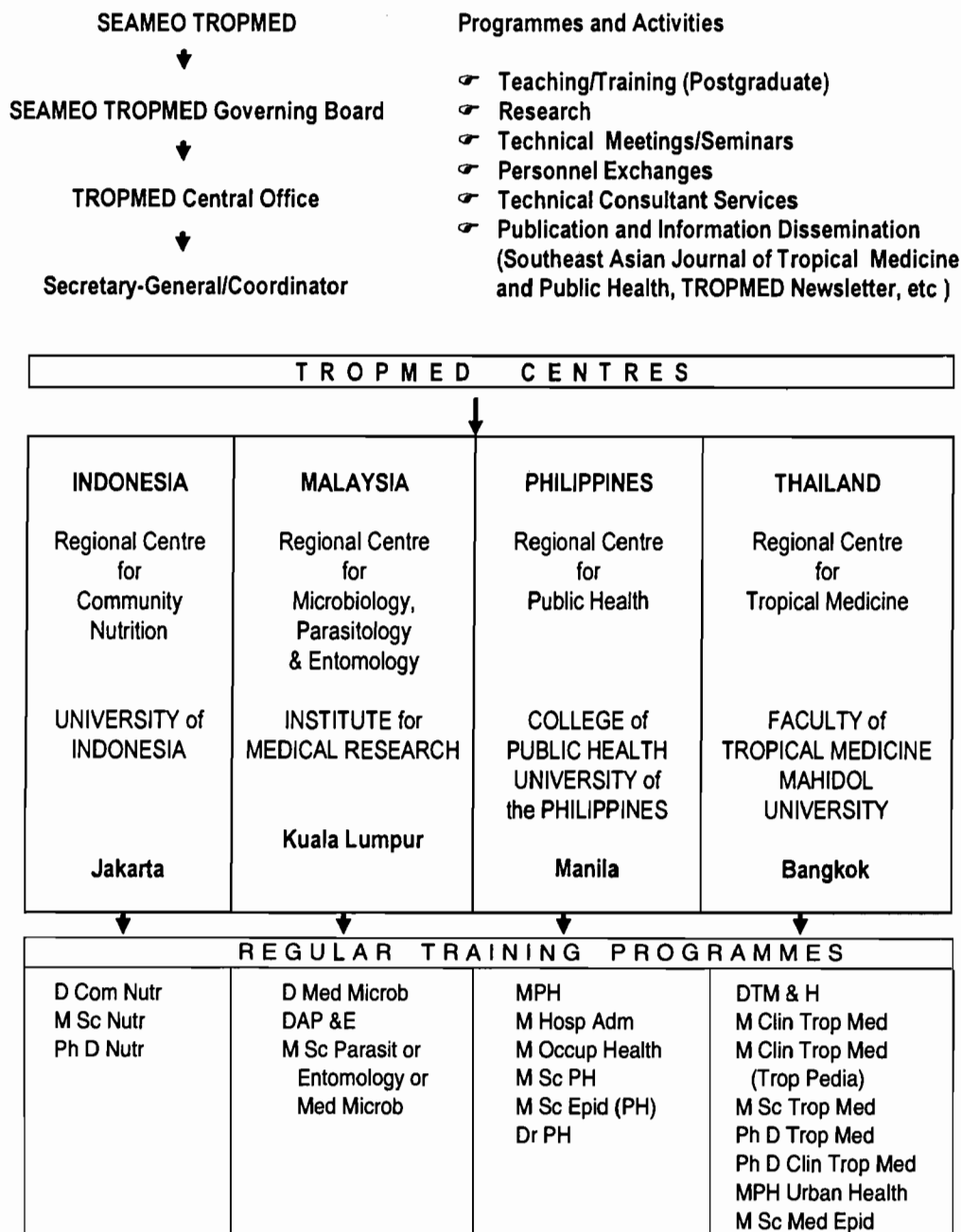


Fig 2—Structure and functions of SEAMEO TROPMED Network.

tential for establishing an organizational structure to undertake cooperative activities in teaching, research and training in tropical medicine and public health under the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) (CCB, 1967). In time the Task Force completed the mission and submitted a report with specific recommendations to then SEAMES Director, Dr Kaw Swasdi Panich (SEAMES, 1966).

The Task Force recommended that a Southeast Asian Regional Center for Tropical Medicine be established consisting of a Central Coordinating Board (CCB) and a National Tropical Medicine Center in each of the four participating countries. Since Thailand has had a teaching and research institute for tropical medicine in the last seven years and being located in Bangkok as the interim SEAMES office, the Task Force further recommended that the CCB be established at the Faculty of Tropical Medicine of the University of Medical Sciences (now Mahidol University) and that the Dean of the Faculty of Tropical Medicine be invited to serve as the first Secretary-General/Coordinator of the CCB.

SEAMES endorsed the report of the Task Force at the Second Conference of the Council of Education Ministers (SEAMEC) in Manila in November 1966. At that conference Indonesia became a member and submitted a proposal for a National Tropical Medicine Center based at the School of Medicine, University of Indonesia in Jakarta, thus increasing the number of TROPMED National Centers to five. The Council approved the recommendations of the Task Force.

The first CCB meeting was held at the Faculty of Tropical Medicine in March, 1967. Prof Chamlong Harinasuta, then Dean of the Faculty, was officially elected Secretary-General/Coordinator. He served in that capacity until 1994. It was at the 5th CCB

meeting in Tokyo in 1968 that the designation of SEAMEO Regional Tropical Medicine and Public Health Project (SEAMEO TROPMED) was adopted, with the coordinating unit, TROPMED Central Office, at its present location in Bangkok.

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF TROPMED HOST INSTITUTIONS

The Task Force saw that it would be logistically difficult for any one of the four participating countries to manage a comprehensive and autonomous regional center. The provision and maintenance of adequate facilities and trained staff to a newly constituted center would entail a considerable and long-term obligation on the part of each government. Yet, cooperation among Asians was vital to the prosperity and stability of the region.

In succeeding meetings of the Central Coordinating Board, the governments of participating countries offered existing institutions to host and perform the functions of TROPMED National Centers.

By 1971, the TROPMED Central Office was responsible for coordinating activities in 8 TROPMED National Centers with the admission into membership of Laos (1968), Singapore (1970) and Khmer Republic (Cambodia, 1971) and their respective areas of specialization as follows :

TROPMED National Centers (as of 1971) :

Country	Specialization
Indonesia	: Nutrition and food science
Khmer Republic	: Leprosy and sexually-transmitted diseases
Laos	: Public health and helminthology
Malaysia	: Applied Parasitology and Entomology
Philippines	: Public Health and Rural Medicine
Singapore	: Urban and Occupational Medicine and Family Planning
Thailand	: General and Clinical Tropical Medicine and Tropical Pediatrics
Vietnam	: Communicable Diseases, Plague and Enteric Infections

Due to policy changes in Indochina in April 1975 and in Singapore, active membership in

¹ The members of the Task Force were: Prof Chamlong Harinasuta, Dean, Faculty of Tropical Medicine (Thailand); Dr Ungku Omar Ahmad, Director, Institute for Medical Research (Malaysia); Dr Julian Paguyo, Superintendent of Medical Schools (Philippines); Prof Nguyen Huu, Department of Anatomy and Surgery and Emeritus Prof Nguyen Van Ai, Director, Pasteur Institute (South Vietnam); Dr JS Willington, Associate Dean, University of California School of Medicine (USA); Col WD Tigertt, Director, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Washington, DC (USA); and Prof Brian G Maegraith, Dean, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (UK).

SEAMEO TROPED was confined to Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. Nonetheless, cooperation with Singapore continued through the Department of Community, Occupational and Family Medicine, National University of Singapore under the USAID-ASEAN Program for Applied Tropical Medicine and Public Health from 1981 to 1992².

From 1975 to present date, the Governments of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand have continually provided the infrastructure, faculty of instruction, and administrative staff to TROPED Centres through their host institutions as contributions in kind (apart from their membership contributions) to SEAMEO³. Regular course offerings in these institutions are attended by both SEAMEO and non-SEAMEO supported students. In addition, other functions are carried out in relation to other national, regional, and international agencies *eg.* WHO, JICA, IDRC, etc.

Following the approval of the proposal for "Regionalization of SEAMEO TROPED Centres" at the 28th SEAMEC Conference in Singapore in 1993, the TROPED National Centres were renamed as follows, with their respective fields of specialization and host institutions, altogether constituting the SEAMEO TROPED Network as it is to date⁴:

SEAMEO TROPED Network

TROPED Center	Host Institution
TROPED/Indonesia: Regional Center for Community Nutrition Jakarta	University of Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture Jakarta
TROPED/Malaysia: Regional Center for Microbiology, Parasitology and Entomology	Institute for Medical Research Ministry of Health Kuala Lumpur

² Initiated by the Thai Government through the ASEAN Committee on Social Development. Mahido University was designated as the legal agency to receive funds from USAID and Prof Chamlong Harinasuta, as chief executive and legal representative of the Governing Body (composed of representatives from all participating institutions in ASEAN countries).

TROPED/Philippines: College of Public Health
Regional Center for University of the Philippines
Public Health Department of Education,
Culture and Sports
Manila

TROPED/Thailand: Faculty of Tropical Medicine
Regional Center Mahidol University
for Tropical Medicine Ministry of University
Affairs
Bangkok

In this connection, the Ministry of Education in Indonesia made the assurance that there would be no structural or academic encumbrances on their part to accommodate these nominal changes. Malaysia saw this as enhancing the status of the Institute for Medical Research without changing its functions. The Philippines and Thailand likewise concurred that the upgrading of TROPED National Centers into Regional Centers within the SEAMEO TROPED Network will broaden their financial base, strengthen their capacities to serve a wider spectrum of clientele, and enable them to gain both local and international prestige.

The structure and functions of the TROPED Central Office and representation in the Governing Board remained unchanged.

On August 13, 1994, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in Jakarta between officials of the Department of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia and SEAMES Director concerning the SEAMEO Regional Center for Community Nutrition in Jakarta. The MOU established the Center as an autonomous, multi-disciplinary academic unit of the University of Indonesia while serving as a regional research and training centre with specialization in community nutrition within the SEAMEO TROPED Network.

³ The host institutions of TROPED Regional Centers in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand are autonomous, academic and multi-disciplinary units under universities whose overall functions and responsibilities include in part serving as SEAMEO units, having been established and maintained by their respective governments as institutions of higher learning under the educational sector. On the other hand, the Institute for Medical Research derives its mandate from the Ministry of Health Malaysia. Despite these diversities, the Network has attained its objectives well in the past 29 years.

⁴ Resolutions adopted by the 28th SEAMEC Conference. Resolution No. 23. The Council approved the proposal for the regionalization of SEAMEO TROPED National Centers (MC-28/WP/20).

The interrelationships and management of TROPMED entities are entirely different from that of other SEAMEO Centers (BIOTROP, INNOTECH, RECSAM, RELC, RIHED, SEARCA, SPAFA, and VOCTECH) and need to be studied from the standpoints of both organizational development and strategic planning.

Changes in the present structure and functions of the SEAMEO TROPMED Network would require revisiting the Enabling Instrument of SEAMEO TROPMED, formulating an Enabling Instrument for each autonomous Regional Center, delineating the operation and logistic requirements of each Center from their host institutions, providing equitable funding for 12 independent Centers under SEAMEO, and installing a mechanism of coordination to ensure sustainability of programs and activities.

OBJECTIVES OF SEAMEO TROPMED

- To train health workers in quality health care management at different levels of the health system, with due regard to diversities in culture, needs and expectations of people for whom these services are intended.
- To support research on endemic and newly emerging diseases associated with changing environments and socio-demographic transistions.
- To advocate relevant health, environment, and development policies thereby ensuring sustainable and equitable development.
- To equip people with the necessary knowledge and skills for self-reliance and self-sufficiency in health.
- To develop integrated approaches to problem-based learning using both traditional and modern educational tools whenever and wherever applicable.
- To minimize the economic burden of disease.

SEAMEO TROPMED is unique insofar as no other similar organization exists in the developing world.

FIRST CHAMLONG HARINASUTA LECTURE

On March 6-8, 1995, the SEAMEO TROPMED/DAAD Alumni Seminar was held in Bangkok, Thai-

land with the theme "Impact of SEAMEO TROPMED Training on Health Development in Southeast Asia". The seminar was convened in cooperation with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to give due recognition to graduates of TROPMED institutions, heretofore, the opportunity to present their views on the role of alumni in health development and services, research and training, and to make recommendations for further collaboration in the region.

The seminar was preceded by the First Chamlong Harinasuta Lecture on "Future Trends and Developments in Tropical Medicine and Public Health" by Dato' Dr M Jegathesan, Deputy Director General (Research and Technical Support), Ministry of Health Malaysia, concurrently TROPMED Center Director and an outstanding TROPMED alumnus himself.

The lecture was intended to honor Professor Chamlong Harinasuta, first Dean of the Faculty of Tropical Medicine and one of the founders of SEAMEO TROPMED as also its first Secretary-General/Coordinator. Prof Tan Chongsupha-jaisiddhi, incumbent Dean of the Faculty of Tropical Medicine, succeeded Prof Chamlong as Secretary-General/Coordinator of the SEAMEO TROPMED Network.

From FY 1967/1968 to FY 1996/1997, a total of 3,353 TROPMED alumni have benefited from training in 26 regular courses (Table 1); of these, 1,596 were females and 1,757 were males (Table 2). From 1991 to 1995 alone, a total of 434 key health personnel have attended short-term training courses, with increasing attendance from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam (Fig 3).

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES UNDER VARIOUS PROGRAMS OF COOPERATION

SEAMEO-AUSTRALIA Institutional Links Program

During the triennium 1992-1995, the Tropical Health Program of the University of Queensland and Queensland Institute of Medical Research worked with SEAMEO TROPMED in an assessment of training and workforce requirements for the control of tropical diseases through Primary Health Care in the three countries of the Mekong

Table 1

Total No. of TROPMED students by course/country, from FY 1967/1968 to FY 1996/1997.

Course	Cambodia	Indonesia	Lao PDR	Malaysia	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam	Total
ASIAN C TROP EPI	9	18	10	16	15	0	17	9	94
CLIN TROP PHARMA	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	6
D COM NUTR	5	138	8	83	80	0	83	29	426
D TROP MICRO/DMM	6	48	5	58	72	0	68	15	272
DAP&E	4	64	13	67	70	1	84	9	312
DrPH	0	6	0	1	12	0	25	0	44
DTM&H	12	174	27	49	146	2	283	7	700
MOH	0	25	0	1	32	0	17	0	75
MME	1	1	2	1	0	0	3	3	11
MPH URBAN	1	78	1	2	37	0	76	0	195
MPH/MHA	3	67	1	78	112	0	73	3	337
MPH (DPH)	0	2	0	0	1	0	3	2	8
MSc NUTR	0	63	2	7	12	0	16	9	109
MCTM	3	14	9	2	10	0	46	3	87
MSc EPID (PH)	1	9	1	0	7	0	12	3	33
MSc MED MICRO	0	2	0	8	6	0	7	0	23
MSc OCC MED	1	19	0	8	7	8	13	1	57
MSc PUB HLTH	0	14	0	24	9	0	19	2	68
MSc T MED	3	39	12	4	35	0	256	3	352
MSPH	0	5	0	1	60	0	12	1	79
PhD A NUTR	0	8	0	0	3	0	6	1	18
PhD T MED	0	16	0	0	8	0	23	0	47
Total	50	810	93	411	735	11	1,142	101	3,353

Table 2

Total No. of Tropmed Students by course/sex, from FY 1967/1968 to FY 1996/1997.

Course	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	F+M
ASIAN C TROP EPI	40	54	94
CLIN TROP PHARMA	0	6	6
D COM NUTR	286	140	426
D TROP MICRO/DMM	171	101	272
DAP&E	136	176	312
DRPH	30	14	44
DTM&H	208	492	700
MOH	38	37	75
MME	6	5	11
MPH URBAN	59	136	195
MPH/MHA	151	186	337
MPH (DPH)	2	6	8
MSc NUTR	73	36	109
MCTM	22	65	87
MSc EPID (PH)	22	11	33
MSc MED MICRO	14	9	23
MSc OCC MED	19	38	57
MSc PUB HLTH	17	51	68
MSc T MED	204	148	352
MSPH	66	13	79
PhD A NUTR	12	6	18
PhD T MED	20	27	47
Total	1,596	1,757	3,353

Region - Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam - as part of the SEAMEO-Australia Institutional Links Program under AusAID (Table 3).

After a series of consultative meetings among officials of SEAMEO TROPMED, Indochina countries and the Australian Center for International and Tropical Health and Nutrition (ACITHN), a proposal for Health Human Resources Development Project in the Mekong Region was drafted and presented for refinement at a workshop held in Bangkok in September 1996.

The consensus as presented at the 35th SEAMEO TROPMED Governing Board Meeting was :

- that health services in the region suffer from lack of managerial capacity, therefore, the need to develop skills in the implementation of national policies and priority programs.
- that the project address problems affecting current training programs which are: English language diffi-

culty; selection of candidates; retraining of staff; rapid staff turn-over; and lack of qualified trainers.

- that a resident unit that could provide, develop and implement management training programs be established.
- that funding sources be explored by both parties concerned.

SEAMEO-CANADA Program of Cooperation in Human Resources Development (Table 4)

Assistance to SEAMEO through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) consisted of the following :

A. SEAMEO Pilot Project for Integrated Community-Based HRD which included support for long-term and short-term training programs, seminars, workshops, and personnel exchanges from 1985 to 1989.

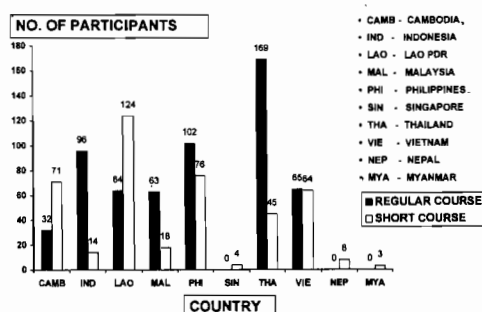


Fig 3—SEAMEO TROPED regular and short training courses trends from FY 1991/1992 to FY 1996/1997.

B. Institutional Cooperation with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), including training of SEAMES and SEAMEO Centre/TROPED Network officials in Strategic Planning and Management and formulation of SEAMEO's Strategic Plan for the 1990s, 1985-1989.

C. Partnership Project between SEAMEO Centers and Canadian Lead Institutions (CLIs) to strengthen both their teaching and research programs and service functions.

Institutions and areas of concentration :

TROPED/Indonesia - University of Manitoba :
Community Nutrition

TROPED/Malaysia - University of Ottawa :
Epidemiology and
Biostatistics

TROPED/Philippines - Memorial University of
Newfoundland :
Community Medicine
and Telemedicine

TROPED/Thailand - University of Calgary :
Clinical Tropical
Medicine and Biotechnology

Achievements of the partnership project :

- Training of TROPED staff in Canada

- Reciprocal visits of TROPED and CLI officials for planning and enhancing linkages
- Technical consultant services
- Provision of minor equipment for teaching and research

Following a regional seminar on HIV/AIDS in 1994, supported by CIDA, SEAMEO TROPED embarked on continuing activities on AIDS in partnership with UNESCO, France, and the Federal Republic of Germany through the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), and others.

SEAMEO-FRANCE Program of cooperation (Table 5)

Activities under this program of cooperation in the past few years :

- Regional and In-Country Training Courses in Applied Epidemiology pertaining to Community Nutrition, Border Malaria, Diagnostic Parasitology, with particular emphasis on training of key health personnel from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam.
- Participation of SEAMEO TROPED officials in the 1st Distance Education Workshop held in Bangkok in December 1994.
- Regional Workshop on Collaboration in HIV/AIDS Surveillance and Control, convened in Bangkok in November 1995. The Workshop aimed to integrate previous efforts against the HIV/AIDS pandemic through a multisectoral approach. In attendance were 41 participants representing Cambodia, France, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, South China, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- Training of TROPED staff in France.
- Participation of French experts in SEAMEO TROPED's activities.

SEAMEO TROPED Collaboration with Germany (Table 6)

Cooperation with Germany has been in the form of :

- Scholarship support for M Sc and Ph D studies of qualified candidates from SEAMEO countries since 1967, through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).
- Partnership with GTZ in Health Research and Human Resources Development as follows :
Institution-strengthening
Health and nutrition

Table 3

SEAMEO-Australia Institutional Links Programme 1992-1995
Control of Tropical Diseases Through PHC

OBJECTIVES

- Improve capacity for training and research in TROPMED Centres
- Strengthen Health-related institutions in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam
- Improve health services in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam

ACTIVITIES

- Workshop for health manpower development for top level health officials from Indochina
- Strengthening of health economics course in TROPMED/Philippines
- Strengthening community nutrition program in TROPMED/Indonesia
- Training of TROPMED staff on MIS/PMS

SEAMEO-AUSTRALIA ACTIVITIES

- In-Country Trainers Training in VN: 60 provincial/district level personnel
 - In-Country Trainers Training in Cambodia: 19 national/provincial level personnel
 - In-Country Trainers Training in Lao PDR
 - Regional Workshop on Tropical Diseases and PHC, Bangkok
 - Regional Trainers Training Workshop, Manila
 - Workshop/Consultative Meeting on Public Health and Tropical Medicine Education in SEAsia
 - ✧ 54 academic and health officials from Australia, Indochina, Germany and TROPMED Network
 - ✧ development of HHRD plane for Mekong Region
 - Closer collaboration with Australian institutions esp ACITHN in Brisbane, Queensland
 - Preparation of proposal for an Endowment Fund for Tropical Medicine and Public Health in the Asia-Pacific Region
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Table 4

Institution-strengthening and training.

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- ✍ Development of the SEAMEO TROPMED Regional Center for Community Nutrition in Jakarta, Indonesia, 1990 onward
 - ▲ Establishment of Collaborating Centers in Community Nutrition (CCCN) in Indonesia and Vietnam
 - ▲ Development of D Com Nutr and MSc Nutr at NIN, Hanoi
 - ✍ UCPH-FRG-GTZ Cooperation Project, Philippines 1982 to present
 - ▲ Community Health Development Project with Department of Health and Cavite City
 - ▲ Environmental and Occupational Health as main focus
 - ▲ Strengthening of the electronic resources of UPM-CPH Library
 - ▲ Construction of Distance Education Annex Bldg
 - ▲ Development of MSc Epidemiology (Public Health) Course
 - ✍ Advanced Asian Course in Tropical Epidemiology
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Table 5

SEAMEO TROPMED - France Programme of Cooperation in Applied Epidemiology in Health Sciences 1993-1996.

Regional Trainings	No of participants
1) Short course on Tropical Diseases and Epidemiology, Bangkok	15
2) Border Malaria, Bangkok	36
Regional Workshops	
1) Collaboration on HIV/AIDS Surveillance and Control, Bangkok	41
2) Practical Clinical Parasitology, Bangkok	7
3) Hospital and Public Health Laboratory, Vientiane	20
In-country Training	
1) Tropical Medicine and Epidemiology, Vientiane	60
2) Community Nutrition Management, Hanoi	20
3) Clinical and Public Health Laboratory Diagnosis, Phnom Penh	20

Table 6

Other SEAMEO TROPMED Involvement in GTZ Programs.

- Cambodian-German Cooperation in Public Health:
 - ▲ Staff development of National Institute of Public Health
 - ▲ District health system development
 - ▲ Curriculum development
 - ▲ Diagnostic laboratory
- Training in Community Skills Development, Khon Kaen University, 4-15 March 1996
- German-Mongolian Reproductive Health Project in Ulan Bator, 23 September - 5 October 1996
- Participation in conferences & scientific fora
- Maximizing linkages with other international, regional & national organizations

Community Health Development
Training in Epidemiology
Environmental and Occupational Health
HIV/AIDS/STD Control (CHASPPAR)
Distance Education

SEAMEO TROPMED SCENARIO AND FUTURE INITIATIVES

Infectious diseases and malnutrition will continue to be among the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in developing countries albeit limited success might have been achieved in some. Envi-

ronmental trends indicate that pollution of all kinds, deforestation, soil erosion, desertification, salinization, vector control, water supply and sanitation, solid and toxic wastes disposal will continue to be major environmental issues affecting health in this and possibly in the next century. Malaria and other vector-borne diseases will persist in the tropics and sub-tropics even as the climate changes.

Migration of people across borders and overseas will result in globalization of all countries with possible importation and spread of communicable diseases. In newly industrialized countries the proliferation of urban slums resulting from rural migration and haphazard development generates

environmental and occupational health problems of both infectious and non-infectious nature. The complex environment in cities with all its inequities serves as the breeding ground for stress factors leading to mental disorders, suicide, frustration, aggression, and felony. Meanwhile, the AIDS pandemic threatens both impoverished and affluent societies.

Greater attention will have to be given to gender and reproductive health issues, Primary Health Care, for that matter, Primary Environmental Care, rehabilitative medicine, travel medicine, degenerative diseases, and malignancies. The goal is to optimize access to basic and specialized health care for all, and to develop capabilities in the application of both traditional and modern technology for greater self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

HE Dr Ricardo T Gloria (1997), Secretary of Education, Culture and Sports, Republic of the Philippines and SEAMEC President, in his keynote speech cited three major forces of change having significant implications on human resources development in the SEAMEO Region in the forthcoming century.

These are:

- Globalization and global competitiveness affecting various aspects of life. The search for new knowledge and technologies will bring countries with similar aspirations closer thus, creating the need for collaborative efforts in education, science and culture.
- That the largest population growth rates are exhibited by countries in this region so that by the first decade of the 21st century, majority of the world's population will be from the region. Moreover, by then, more than half of the population will be below 18 in contrast to smaller and older populations in developed countries.
- Asia will be the next economic growth center in the next millenium presaging a period of rapid growth and dissemination of knowledge and technologies. For the individual, this translates into having to deal with a wide range of choices and the need for the ability to manage change.

NEW ROLE OF SEAMEO TROPMED

The scope of SEAMEO TROPMED's work has evolved from its traditional academic role in training and research to that of serving as a forum for international development in health heretofore, to be an agent of change in the way educational insti-

tutions should develop. The Network has long addressed the need for effective and affordable strategies for health sector reform and advocacy on relevant health, environment and development policies through its various programs and activities.

Since health status and responses to health needs cannot be isolated from socio-economic considerations and with these empowerment to influence health policies and decisions, these as well as environmental issues are already integrated in both regional and in-country projects. Thus, the impact of poverty, malnutrition and communicable diseases on socio-economic development is a priority concern of SEAMEO TROPMED.

The effectiveness of the SEAMEO TROPMED Network nevertheless depends on the collective strength of and the spirit of cooperation among its host institutions, host governments and partners. The challenge TROPMED now faces is that of expanding its education and research programs into all developing countries in the region. To accomplish this, the TROPMED Central Office aims to develop a more active partnership with institutions and agencies in developed countries and to establish a network of affiliated institutions throughout the Asia-Pacific Region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The SEAMEO TROPMED Network, through its Governing Board, gratefully acknowledges the invaluable support of the Governments of SEAMEO Member Countries and Associate Member Countries; donor governments and agencies; institutional partners; SEAMEO Secretariat; TROPMED Centers' Host Institutions; and all those who, in one way or another, have made it possible for the Network to fulfill its mission and goals.

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