

LANKAPHEIN
N. Gunawardena

In accordance with a decision made by the South East Asian Public Health Institutions Network (SEAPHEIN) was established in 2004, the Sri Lanka Chapter of the Network, LANKAPHEIN was inaugurated on the 22nd September 2008, during the Annual Academic Sessions of the College of Community Physicians of Sri Lanka. The first meeting of LANKAPHEIN was held on 03rd November 2008.

The meeting was chaired by Prof. A.R. Wickramasinghe President, The College of Community Physicians of Sri Lanka and Prof. Dulitha Fernando focal point for Sri Lanka to the SEAPHEIN (South East Asia Public Health Education Institutes Network). Prof. Hasbulla Thabrany, current Chairperson of SEAPHEIN and Dr. Agostinno Borra, Country Representative to Sri Lanka, World Health organization participated as the guests of honour. Invitees from medical faculties that conduct training programmes on public health, units of Ministry of health that provide training in public health and individuals who have made a significant contribution to public health education and training in the country were present at the meeting.

Prof. A.R. Wickramasinghe welcomed the gathering. Prof. Thabrany explained the aims, goals and activities of the SEAPHEIN. Dr. Agostinno Borra congratulated Sri Lanka for taking up the initiative to establish a public health education institutes' network and pledged the support of World Health Organization in the coming years. Prof. Dulitha Fernando, explained the history of SEAPHEIN and its activities and the objectives of the local networks to be established in the member countries.

Prof. A.R. Wickramasinghe read out the Charter of LANKAPHEIN which was formally adopted. According to the charter the secretariat of LANKAPHEIN will function under the auspices of the College of Physicians in Sri Lanka for the initial three years and will be located at the Public Health Lounge.

Vision

To be a collaborative network of Public Health Education Institutes in Sri Lanka for strengthening Public Health capacity.

Mission

To promote collaboration for partnership of Sri Lankan member institutes to improve and sustain the quality and relevance of Public Health education to address the increasing challenges for the improvement of health in Sri Lanka.

Objectives

The Network seek to share its resources on order to achieve the following objectives:

1. To make public health education programmes relevant to meet the health challenges in the country.
2. To establish collaborative programmes in education and training.
3. To provide evidence-based and new knowledge through research within the country and to promote the use of research finding in decision making.
4. To strengthen the capacity and resources of member institutes through faculty and student exchange of information, learning materials and methods.
5. To facilitate the implementation of accreditation process and quality assurance in public health education in the country.
6. To assist with consultation, advocacy and provision of technical advice to improve national public health education in the country.
7. To promote leadership development for practice and policy making in public health.
8. To establish link with SEAPHEIN and other multilateral and bilateral organizations and institutions.

Strategies

The general strategies of the network will be to facilitate the following:

1. Development of curricula and continuing education programmes, re-orient learning methods and conduct research to refine curricula in public health in Sri Lanka.
2. Creation of information systems in line with education needs in Sri Lanka.
3. Establishment of partnerships and strengthening existing programmes.
4. Prioritization and promotion of conduct of research in public health in Sri Lanka, compiling a bibliography of public health research and building comprehensive capacity among stakeholders in all stage of research.
5. Institutionalization of programmes for capacity building, inventorisation of available resources (human and other) and learning material resources and identifying needs for staff and student exchange within institutions in Sri Lanka.
6. Development of institutional accreditation mechanisms by establishing a Sri Lankan quality assurance and accreditation council for public health.

6. Organization of consultative meetings on priority areas of public health programmes and health care in Sri Lanka
7. Promotion of leadership and management skills at national, provincial and district levels.
8. Promotion of the concept of learning organizations.

Membership

A public health educational institute is defined as an institute or a Faculty of a University having a Department of Community Medicine/Public Health or equivalent that provides education or training in public health as a main function or engages in such activities as a substantial part of its routine work. Units in the Ministry of Health providing education or training in public health may be considered as independent institutes.

Types of Members

Ordinary members

The following may become ordinary members on application and approval of the Steering Committee of LANKAPHEIN

A Faculty in an University that conducts programmes on Public Health

An unit of the Health Ministry that provides in Public Health or is engaged in teaching or training in Public Health

Other institutes that engage in teaching or training in Public Health as a substantial function.

Affiliate members:

An institute that engages in teaching or training in Public Health as a minor function may be invited to be an affiliate member.

Honorary members:

Honorary Membership may be granted to an official holding an important position related to education and training in Public Health or to an individual who has made a significant contribution to Public Health in Sri Lanka.

Activities for 2008/2009

1. To revise the curriculum for MSc Community Medicine/ MD Community Medicine
2. To provide a platform for exchange of information on training programmes in public health by the partner institutions
3. To conduct tutor training programmes for tutor staff of NIHS
4. To develop a database of training programmes in the field of Public health
5. To develop collaborative research programmes
6. Develop criteria for accreditation of Public health Institutions
7. To develop a website for LANKAPHEIN