

Abstract

Collaborative research partnerships for public health capacity building in the US, Indonesia, and Myanmar: Connecting academic, community, and non-profit professionals

Heidi West, MA, CMMB, New York, NY and Tomoyuki Shibata, Ph.D., Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

APHA 2016 Annual Meeting & Expo (Oct. 29 - Nov. 2, 2016)

Purpose: This presentation will demonstrate how a small US-based research group with limited resources can address needs and build capacity in Global Environmental Health (GEH) education and research. Middle-income countries in Southeast Asia require increased GEH capacity similar to many low-income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Comparative Need). Faculty from multiple universities in Indonesia and Myanmar have requested workshops, partnerships, and collaborative environmental health research activities (Expressed Need). Throughout the world the leading causes of death in children under five are strongly associated with environmental exposures. GEH interventions need to be improved (Normative Need). Increased connections between academic researchers and the communities in need of GEH capacity can help to improve public health interventions (Felt Need). **Approaches:** 1) Building networks with scholars, 2) offering hands-on research workshops at partner sites abroad, 3) investigating modifiable risk factors for childhood illnesses quantitatively, and 4) establishing a non-profit organization (NPO). **Results:** 1) Since 2009, our research network has been expanded to include 15 universities, and scholars and students in the US, Indonesia, Japan, and Myanmar. 2) Since 2011, approximately 200 American, Indonesian and Burmese participants have advanced their knowledge and research skills through workshops and mentorship activities. 3) Since 2012, thirteen papers were read at prestigious conferences and five papers were published in journals. Findings have been shared with local educators and public health professionals. 4) NPO was established in 2015. **Recommendation:** Science-based NPO may play a significant role in bridging academia and other stakeholders in order to maximize public health outcomes.

Assessment of individual and community needs for health education Environmental health sciences Program
planning Public health or related education Public health or related research