

Changing our thinking about health for the 21st Century

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has. Margaret Mead

As we move into 2008 this issue of the SACHRU newsletter starts with some thoughts about change at many levels. Change (for better or worse) often seems to be the only constant in our increasingly frenetic lives.

Changes in approaches to health

In South Australia, the second visit by Illona Kickbusch (Thinker in Residence) has stimulated discussion about new ways to think about health. We look forward to her report, which will be finalised in April, (see page 2 for more details).

Meanwhile the Australian and SA State Government are using health language that features general practice (super clinics, GP Plus Health Care Centres) and that focus on access to, and provision of, primary (medical) care. In South Australia we have seen a shift in language from 'community health' to 'primary health care' and now 'out-of-hospital care'. We hope that the findings of the Generational Health Review will be used to stimulate a real reorientation of health services towards health promotion and illness prevention.

Changes at SACHRU - thinking, learning, teaching, planning...

The last three months of 2007 saw SACHRU engaged in thinking (for example with the Thinker in Residence program), learning (from conference attendances, teaching and staff development), and planning for 2008 and beyond.

Angela Lawless acted as a project catalyst for Ilona during her residency. This enabled Angela to work with an acknowledged global leader in areas of shared research interest. The placement also allowed her to engage with key stakeholders such as the Department of Health in a way which provided new insights into the research/policy interface. The dialogue with Ilona and a wide range of stakeholders regarding future directions for public health research will inform SACHRU's planning and enhance SACHRU's responsiveness to the research and workforce development needs of the sector.

Learning

Attending conferences and seminars provides a great opportunity to share the work of SACHRU across academic, policy and health practitioners. Conferences also support our own workforce development and provide access to new ideas that we can use in research and evaluation work.

Teaching and workforce development

SACHRU staff contribute to teaching, training and workforce development in a number of ways – through contributions to teaching and tutoring students of Flinders University, presentations at short courses and seminars, workforce development and training sessions for the health and community sectors and production of resources and individual support for practitioners. Our aim is to increase research and evaluation capacity within the PHC workforce in order to strengthen the evidence for a PHC approach.

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Director's Comments

2008 brings many changes as the new Federal Government settles in. It was inspiring to witness for the first time the ceremony by traditional owners at the opening of the Australian parliament and to see and hear the delivery of an apology to the stolen generations. Let us hope that this will herald a new era in strengthening respectful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians and 'reducing the gap' in health and wellbeing indicators.

In February SACHRU facilitated the first *Comprehensive Primary Health Care Research and Evaluation* short course. There were 36 participants from South Australia, NT, NSW and WA. Evaluation by participants indicated they found the course enjoyable and useful, but also challenging, as many had little experience of research and evaluation beforehand. The aim was to increase the capacity of practitioners in PHC to undertake research and evaluation in order to build up the evidence base for this approach to health services. We hope that participants will go on to refine their proposals and obtain resource support to conduct their research and evaluation projects.

In December SACHRU welcomed two new staff members – Habib Seraji and Elsa Barton. They will be working on a variety of projects within SACHRU over the next year and you can read their profiles on page 7.

We are continuing to look at ways to develop *Research Matters* and during 2008 Angela Lawless will be exploring how to increase the usefulness of the newsletter for our many readers.

Finally we are very pleased to announce that Flinders University has been awarded the hosting rights (along with the Co-operative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health) for the 2008 Fulbright Symposium. The Fulbright program is the largest educational scholarship of its kind and was created by United States Senator J. William Fulbright and the U.S. Government in 1946. Aimed at promoting mutual understanding through educational exchange, it currently operates between the US and more than 150 nations. Entitled *Healthy People, Prosperous Country* the symposium will be held in Adelaide from 10-11 July. The symposium will examine issues such as how to encourage whole of government action to promote health and well-being locally and nationally, and explore ways in which existing inequities in the health status of different groups in the population, including those based on race, can be addressed. Michael Bentley is coordinating this prestigious event.

Gwyn Jolley, Acting Director

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Planning for 2008 and beyond

SACHRU's planning needs to accommodate short and long term strategies for advancing community health research and evaluation. In the short term, we provide an annual plan to the SA Department of Health outlining planned activities in line with our key directions. Activities and achievements are then reported on twice per year. In addition we produce an annual 'Report of Activities' available on the website.

Most research is of course more long term with long lead times between applying for a grant, hearing if we have been successful (or not!) and implementation. Current research in this category includes our work on the international Teasdale-Corti project reported on page 3 and related research and evaluation into comprehensive PHC. Our updated key directions for 2008 – 2013 are:

1. Contribute to health reform through researching the dynamics and outcomes of primary health care and population health approaches to health promotion and illness prevention.
2. Research the social, economic and environmental determinants of health, well-being and equity and interventions to address these, and how they contribute to achieving the objectives of the SA Strategic Plan.
3. Encourage the uptake of research knowledge relevant to promoting population health in policy and practice.
4. Increase capacity and skills in the PHC and population health workforce to undertake research and evaluation.

Thinker in Residence Program

Flinders University was one of the partners for Professor Ilona Kickbusch's Thinkers' residency and Angela Lawless had the opportunity of working with Ilona and the team at the Thinkers Office. Ilona Kickbusch will be known to most of you as the architect of the Ottawa Charter. In the 21st century Professor Kickbusch is calling for radical change in the way we think about and govern health. Health is increasingly being shaped by forces such as globalization, the speed and mobility of modern societies, and new media. These new influences have a profound effect on health.

Three main areas emerged during Professor Kickbusch's residencies. In all three areas health equity is a key consideration. Firstly Professor Kickbusch reiterated the message that public policy is a critical foundation for the creation of healthy societies. We must develop "policies for health" which work to address both the classic determinants of health and the new factors that emerge which influence health. This message has been received positively with a 'Health In all Policies' policy learning process developed to advance this approach in South Australia. Health sustainability, particularly the development of a strategic approach to the 'obesity epidemic' was another area of significant activity. Professor Kickbusch posed the challenge of creating Generation H (for Health) through intersectoral action to support the healthy development of young South Australians. Health Literacy was another area identified as requiring action to meet the challenges of 21st century societies. In order to navigate the complexities of modern societies people require new health competencies from self-managing chronic diseases to selecting healthy foods. A tripartite approach to health literacy includes the consumers, literacy friendly environments and the communication competence of health care professionals.

South Australia has figured prominently in international agenda-setting for health. In 1988 Adelaide hosted the Second International Conference on Healthy Public Policy. The Adelaide recommendations set an agenda that is still relevant today. Innovative primary health care approaches and health promotion have been developed in this state. It is hoped that Professor Kickbusch's residency and recommendations act to reinvigorate South Australia's efforts to achieve Health for All and position us again as international leaders.

Report on the first International meeting of the researchers involved in the “Revitalising Health for All: Learning from Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC) Experiences” held in Johannesburg, South Africa from Wednesday, 28th November - Saturday, 1st December 2007

This meeting, attended by myself and Fran Baum was the first face to face gathering of researchers from around the world working on the “Revitalising Health for All” grant funded by the Teasdale-Corti fund, based in Canada. The purpose of this partnership is to gather, in rigorous and systematic fashion, existing knowledge of Comprehensive Primary Health Care’s past accomplishments and to undertake new studies of its current achievements and possibilities. Fran Baum is a lead investigator on this five year grant and I, with assistance from Angela Lawless, Rama Ramanathan and Julie Johns, have been undertaking the first stage-a literature review and synthesis on the evidence for effectiveness of CPHC in Australasia and part of Asia.

The four day meeting was held in Johannesburg, South Africa and brought together researchers from Canada, South Africa, South America, Europe, India and Australia to discuss the findings from a worldwide literature review on evaluations of comprehensive primary health care programs and services. The first day of the meeting was taken up with each region presenting the preliminary findings of their reviews with chances to exchange information about the review process and the types of findings from around the world. Having worked on Australasia/Asia, it was very interesting and informative to compare and contrast our findings with those from Europe, North and South America, Africa and the grey literature in Asia. There were a number of similarities identified in the process issues including the difficulty of finding rigorous studies of comprehensive primary health care and a wide variation in the number of studies that met the inclusion criteria across the regions. Our region was generally well advanced in our review but with some work still to do. The report of our findings to date was well received.

The following three days were devoted to exploring and making decisions about how the findings of the literature review could be used to advance and inform a research agenda for comprehensive primary health care in line with the research program’s objectives. Topics discussed in light of the findings of the literature reviews included:

- The potential contents, structure and presenters for a series of two week courses on implementing and evaluating comprehensive primary health care. These courses will be held throughout 2008 in Canada, Australia, South America, India and Africa.
- The completion of the literature reviews and their use thereafter. The meeting agreed that some identified short-comings of the literature reviews needed to be addressed and allocated additional funding from the budget to allow this to occur. In the case of

Australasia, a targeted search of the grey literature using known contacts to fill some of the gaps not covered in the scientific literature will be the focus of the next few months. Completion of the papers was agreed for the end of May 2008. In the longer term, the reviews will be published, both in a report with the Canadian team providing a summary of the worldwide findings, and individually reported through conferences and possibly, journal articles. This will continue to be a collaborative venture with the researchers in the various countries keeping in contact as the reviews are finalised and reported.

The processes for recruiting and funding researchers in comprehensive primary health care through a peer-reviewed expression of interest are to be released in early 2008 and assessed by June, 2008.

The most beneficial part of the meeting for myself as a researcher was to meet with the others from around the world and discuss and compare findings. The researchers convened a special breakfast meeting to clarify and compare processes and I was able to provide some specific input to a couple of researchers from Africa who had had more difficulty in locating suitable studies for inclusion. I was also able to liaise with the researcher from India who will now take on the reviews our team has completed to include in his summary so that the scientific and grey literature for the sub-continent and other selected parts of Asia are combined. It was also useful to gain a greater understanding of how the findings of the literature review are informing the next stages of the project and to give input to these. Future activities are also planned, including my involvement in the local training course on Comprehensive Primary Health Care in Adelaide in February 2008 with involvement from the Canadian and South African investigators. The opportunity to be involved in a multi-regional project such as this one has been challenging and exciting one.

Any queries, please contact **Catherine Hurley** on 8204 5975 or email catherine.hurley@flinders.edu.au

Upcoming events

6-9 July 2008 Population Health Congress Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre <http://www.populationhealthcongress.org.au/>

2008 Fulbright Symposium to be held in Adelaide

The Australian-American Fulbright Commission has awarded Flinders University and the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health the 2008 Symposium hosting rights. Entitled *Healthy People, Prosperous Country* the Symposium will be held from 10-12 July at the National Wine Centre in Adelaide. The symposium will examine how to encourage whole of government action to promote health and well-being locally and nationally and explore ways in which existing inequities in the health status of different groups in the population, can be addressed. The central themes of the Symposium concern the importance of the social determinants of health and health inequities in Australia and the United States, with a particular focus on Indigenous health.

Fran Baum is the co-leader of the Symposium and Michael Bentley is the Program Manager.

For further information, contact **Michael Bentley** by email at michael.bentley@flinders.edu.au or by phone on (08) 8204 5981.

Healthy and Sustainable Cities and Communities short course

Through the five days (12-16 November 2007) of this short course, seventeen participants from South Australia, interstate and New Zealand explored questions such as: What is a healthy community? How do we create healthy and liveable cities? What does it mean to be socially and environmentally sustainable?

An important focus of the course was on the role of collective action across sectors (community, local government, education, environment, health) in promoting health and wellbeing within the broader context of social, environmental, economic and cultural sustainability. The three keynote speakers (Professors Fran Baum, Ilona Kickbusch and Ian Lowe) and a panoply of guest presenters covered a range of issues relating to health and sustainability.

Sustainability was looked at through a number of perspectives: social sustainability, environmental sustainability in a local government context, an ecological economics perspective, and from Indigenous land management.

Other presentations covered tackling climate change, energy and equity, food and the environment, participation and partnerships for promoting health, evaluation research for Healthy Cities, sustainable futures, and strategies for organisational, political and community change.

Participants also had the opportunity to see Healthy Cities in action, with a site visit to healthy Cities Noarlunga and bus tour of the City of Onkaparinga.

The short course aimed to provide participants with knowledge and skills and national and international insights for developing Healthy and Sustainable Cities and Communities approaches, programs and projects.

The participants rated the course very highly (average rating of 4.7/5). Here's what some of them had to say:

The fantastic guest speakers were able to provide us with theory into practice. There was also lots of variety in the course & very enriching & stimulating. It also provided me with creative ideas & ways for making change.

Superb selection of speakers – the keynote speakers were very good – the panel discussion on the last day stand out for me. Also excellent organisation & facilitation.

I enjoyed the variation in speakers that presented during the course. It was great to hear from different knowledge and skill bases & helps to gain an understanding on how things are done in various environments & work places. The course provided a good variation in topics that each of us can gain knowledge and learn from.

It was great to get some confidence around the idea that as individuals, we can all make a difference. It is often difficult to see how you can have the power to help change, but this course has given me some ideas as to how we can put things into action.



The course will be run again this year from **13th-17th October (see advert on page 6).**

For enquiries or to register your interest, contact the short course administrator (public.health@flinders.edu.au or tel: 08 8204 3005).

For further information, please contact **Michael Bentley** (michael.bentley@flinders.edu.au or tel: 08 8204 5981).

International Forum for the Alliance for Healthy Cities

The International Forum for the Alliance for Healthy Cities was held from 26th – 28th September, Gold Coast, Queensland. Since its establishment in 2003, membership of the Alliance has grown to 75 including cities and communities from Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, and Vietnam. The goal of the Alliance is to promote and protect health and improve the quality of life of urban populations in a sustainable manner through the Healthy Cities approach. Dr. Hisashi Ogawa, Regional Advisor, Western Pacific Regional Office, described the Healthy Cities approach as a best practice response to the many health and sustainability issues facing the world today.

Fran Baum presented on 'Healthy Cities and the Social Determinants of Health' and Gwyn Jolley and Richard Hicks (Chair, Healthy Cities Noarlunga) presented a paper entitled 'A Healthy Cities Approach: a case study from Noarlunga after 20 years.

A proposal to develop an Australian Healthy Cities chapter was signed by representatives from several local government areas, universities and the WHO. The proposal will be more fully developed at a proposed meeting in Kiama, NSW and presented to the 3rd Global Assembly in Ichikawa, Japan, in 2008.

Asia-Pacific Eco Health Conference 2007 (Ecology and Health: People & Places in a Changing World)

Shortly after the Healthy and Sustainable Cities and Communities short course, Michael Bentley attended the Asia-Pacific Eco Health Conference (held at Deakin University in Melbourne, 1-3 December 2007). The focus of the conference was on the interdependence between human health, ecology and sustainability.

On the Saturday and Sunday, a number of keynotes and concurrent sessions explored the following themes:

- Cultural change, environments and health
- Measuring the links between environments and health
- Ecological literacies in health practice
- Systemic thinking, environments and health
- Indigenous and local perspectives, environments and health

Michael presented on *The links between local environmental actions of healthy cities and climate change*. His paper made the point that Healthy Cities and other programs that focus on sustainability are limited if they act alone. Through their local relationships and participation in regional networks, Healthy Cities can make connections between local environmental actions and the health impacts of climate change. Moreover, there is a case for environmentally healthy cities to be socially just as well. A *just* sustainability should be a central aim of strategies that tackle climate change, social equity and health. Healthy Cities can contribute to collective thinking and collective action on climate change and the social and environmental sustainability of cities.

Highlights of the conference were two workshops presented on the third day of the conference.

Professor Valerie A Brown presented a workshop on whole of community thinking, transformational change and a sustainable future. In *Getting it together in a changing world* participants explored integrative thinking and action for those working in areas of social change, environmental futures, action research, community development, professional extension, and strategic planning. Some of the skills explored were management of dialogue, whole-of-community engagement, positive conflict outcomes and collective social learning. Participants shared these experience and skills while trialling a collective social learning framework.

In the second workshop (*Catchments as Settings*), Assoc. Prof. Pierre Horwitz and Dr Margot Parkes proposed 'healthy ecosystems' as a 'setting' (*sensu* the Ottawa Charter) for promoting health and sustainability, with a particular emphasis on hydrological catchments (or watersheds). Their hypothesis is that catchments are ideal units of analysis since they foreground water, around which all life revolves. The workshop critically examined this proposal, with participants discussing, inter alia, issues of governance, local involvement, and case studies.

For further information, please contact **Michael Bentley** (michael.bentley@flinders.edu.au or tel: 08 8204 5981).



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Email: carol.gibb@flinders.edu.au

Phone: **+ 61 8 8204 4628**

Website: <http://som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/PublicHealth>

Public Health Association of Australia Annual Conference

The 38th Public Health Association of Australia Annual Conference returned to Alice Springs in September 2007 with the theme of "Alice 2007 Reality Check, Inequities and Health - Tackling the Differentials". The location of the conference was significant with issues such as the NT Intervention into Aboriginal communities, and nuclear energy high on the agenda, leading up to the (then still to be called) federal election.

Impressive keynote presentations were given by Ian Anderson (National perspectives on Indigenous health – Reality check), Helen Caldicott (The impact of mining and the nuclear fuel cycle on public health) and Pat Anderson (Douglas Gordon Oration). Pat, who is Chair of the Cooperative research Centre for Aboriginal Health and co-author of the *Little Children Are Sacred* report, was awarded the Sidney Sax Medal at the conference.

Fran Baum and Michael Bentley attended and presented at the conference:

- Breakfast session: *Consultation on the interim statement from the WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health – August 2007* (Fran Baum & Shane Houston)
- Workshop: *The People's Health Movement (PHM-OZ): advocating for global health justice* (Fran Baum, Sally Kingsland, Paul Laris and David Legge)
- *Linking social capital, health and class: an Adelaide study* (Fran Baum)
- *Looking through a glass onion – the social determinants of men's health* (Michael Bentley)

Fran and Michael were co-authors (along with Gilbert Gallaher, Anna Ziersch and Catherine Palmer) of the paper, *Racism and its impact on health for urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*, presented at the conference by Gilbert Gallaher.

Fran and Gwyn Jolley (along with Lareen Newman, Colin MacDougall and Anna Ziersch) were co-authors of the paper, *Health and social impacts of redundancy on workers' children and families*, presented at the conference by Lareen Newman.

At the conference, the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health launched *Beyond Bandaid: Exploring the Underlying Social Determinants of Aboriginal Health*. This extensive collection of papers from the Social Determinants of Aboriginal Health Workshop held at Flinders University was edited by Professor Ian Anderson (University of Melbourne), Fran Baum and Michael Bentley.

At the conference dinner, Fran Baum was awarded Life Membership of the Association.



L-R: Prof Mike Daube (PHAA President), Pat Anderson, (Chair of the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health), Fran Baum

DATES TO KEEP IN YOUR DIARY !!

The Dept of Public Health, Flinders University, Adelaide

- * **Qualitative Methods in Public Health Research**
3 Day Short Course
Monday 2nd to Wednesday 4th June 2008

Aims:

This course is designed to provide participants with a broad overview of qualitative research methods and to equip them with basic skills in qualitative research. There will be a strong emphasis on the application of these methods for public health research and evaluation.

Course Facilitator: Dr John Coveney, Associate Professor, Department of Public Health, Flinders University, Adelaide

- * **3 Day Short Course: Designing and Administering Questionnaires**
Monday 1st to Wednesday 3rd September 2008

Aims:

To provide participants with the ability to:

- Gain an understanding & appreciation of constructing questionnaires
- Appreciate different methods of survey administration
- Conduct fundamental data analyses, and to interpret results
- Construct an instrument within a team
- Critically appraise surveys

Course Facilitator: Dr George Tsourtos, Lecturer, Department of Public Health, Flinders University.

Healthy & Sustainable Cities & Communities Short Course 13th October – 17th October 2008

Keynote presenters at the course include:

- Professor Fran Baum, Foundation Director of the South Australian Community Health Research Unit and Head of Department of Public Health, Flinders University
- Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe

Course Facilitator: Michael Bentley, Senior Research Officer, SACHRU

Venue: Flinders University, ADELAIDE, South Australia

Additional Short Courses to follow.

The course dates and content will be confirmed throughout the year and available on the Department of Public Health Website: Short Course information and registration forms are available on our web site:

<http://som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/PublicHealth>

(Click on "Short Courses" under menu)

For further information on any of the Short Courses, please contact:

Phone: 61 – 8- 8204 3005 **Fax:** 61 – 8- 8204 5693

Email: public.health@flinders.edu.au

The short courses marked with an (*) are also available as assessed topics of study with the Department of Public Health.

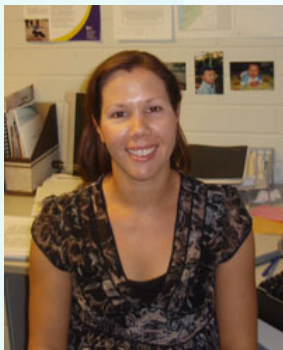
If you would prefer to do the short course as workforce development - that is, without undertaking assignments or further work, please contact Trish Clark and register on a short course registration form to participate.

If you would prefer to undertake an assessed topic of study (and attend the short course) you will need to enrol through the University before the 14th March 2008 for semester 1 and 8th August 2008 for semester 2 and pay a different fee.

For topic/enrolment information contact Carol Gibb (Admin officer, Academic) carol.gibb@flinders.edu.au or 61 – 8 - 8204 4628.

Carol can advise you on how to apply, the topic fees and modes of payment.

New Staff



SACHRU welcomes Elsa Barton who commenced work in December 2007. Elsa holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Adelaide (psychology major) and a Masters of Child and Adolescent Welfare from Charles Sturt University. Elsa began her research career at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the Clinical Epidemiology and Health Outcomes Unit working as a Research Assistant under

Professor Louis Pilotto. She then moved to Victoria to take up a position as a Child Protection Practitioner with the Department of Human Services. She spent 18 months in this role before returning to research, taking up a research assistant position with the Australian Institute of Primary Care (AIPC) at La Trobe University. Here Elsa worked on a range of projects including the Primary Care Partnership Strategy (PCP) and the Workforce Development Strategic Plan Project both commissioned by the Victorian state government. She moved to the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Monash University to take up a more challenging role as Research Officer on the Korean War Veterans Health study. This position involved liaising with the Department of Veterans Affairs and managing the questionnaire mail out to some 6000 Veterans of the Korean War. Returning to South Australia in 2004 to begin a family, Elsa has worked casually and part time predominately with the Centre for Military and Veterans' Health at the University of Adelaide on NHMRC funded research projects investigating longitudinal outcomes of trauma. Elsa currently works part time in SACHRU as a Research Officer.



Habibur Seraji, a public health physician from Bangladesh, joined SACHRU team in November 2007 as Research Associate. His areas of interest embrace program evaluation, health promotion, community based participatory approach in health, community based health intervention trials etc. Habib has a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBBS) from University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

and a Master of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University (JHU), Maryland, USA. Habib started his career in an immunization training program of Bangladesh national immunization project jointly implemented by ministry of health-Bangladesh, UNICEF and Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD). Later he spent 8 years in two spells in ICDDR, B (an international population health research centre) with clinical and public health research roles. These research works, funded by USAID, were jointly implemented by ICDDR, B and JHU and were targeted to improving health and reducing deaths of newborn babies by engaging communities and families. He also played a key role in designing and implementing program evaluation of a large primary health care project in Bangladesh funded by Asian Development Bank. His other tenure with BASICS, Social Marketing Company, Bangladesh and various other national and international organizations involved in major public health initiatives in Bangladesh include training of formal and informal health providers, social marketing in health, engaging community and stakeholders in health.

Strengthening Comprehensive Primary Health Care short course

In February, SACHRU organised a 5 day short course entitled "Comprehensive primary health care research and evaluation 2008". This short course is contributing to the international Teasdale Corti project 'Revitalizing Health for All: Learning from Comprehensive Primary Health Care Experiences' that recognises the need for an increased evidence base for comprehensive PHC in order to strengthen and support the provision of effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable PHC services.

The course was conducted by an eminent panel of international experts in the field of comprehensive PHC comprising of (i) Professor Fran Baum, Head: Department of Public Health and Director: SA Community Health Research Unit (SACHRU), Flinders University, (ii) Professor Ron Labonte, Canada Research Chair, Globalization/Health Equity Institute of Population Health (iii) Associate Professor David Legge, La Trobe University and (iv) Professor David Sanders, Director Public Health Program, University of the Western Cape, South Africa. The other presenters were from SACHRU, Flinders University and Country Health SA.

The aim of this short course was to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to design and implement a comprehensive primary health care research/evaluation project.

The first part of the course included an overview of comprehensive PHC, global learning and case studies, programme logic, theory of change, research methods with focus on participatory research, issues in analysis and research ethics. The final two days were spent in developing proposals for presentation and critique. The overall format of the course was participatory in order to generate discussions, interaction, sharing and reviewing in the form of group work, panel discussions, case studies etc.

The course participants also benefited from the concomitant lunch time seminars given by the panel members. The presentations encompassed social determinants of health, globalization, health sector reform and their impact on health and development.

The course attracted 36 senior and mid-level managers from a range of professional fields with a good mix from health and allied sectors serving urban and rural areas, and mainstream and special population groups.

SACHRU hopes to keep in touch with participants to hear about their ongoing research proposals and successful funding applications.

Habib Seraji, email: habibur.seraji@flinders.edu.au



Some reflections on changes in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a small country in the south Asian delta with a land area of about 144,000 square km (one-fiftieth of Australia) and is one of the most densely populated countries of the world, with a population of about 150 million (more than seven times that of Australia). Forty percent of the population has income below the absolute poverty line, living on less than one US dollar per day. Despite many obstacles, ranging from scarce resources to regular and repeated natural calamities and chronic political instability resulting in periods of stagnation and retardation of national growth and development, Bangladesh has made remarkable developmental progress over time as indicated by improvement in socio-demographic and health indicators like:

- life expectancy (from 55 years in 1981 to 65 years in 2002)
- total fertility (from 5.24 births per women in 1981 to 3.0 in 2004)
- infant mortality (from 111 deaths per 1000 live births in 1981 to 53 in 2003)
- low birth weight- weight <2500 grams at birth (from about 50% in 1993-95 to 40% in 2005)
- female literacy (from 18% in 1981 to 43% in 2002)
- availability of safe drinking water (from 45% in 1991 to 99% in 2001)
- per capita GDP (from US\$217 in 1991 to US\$445 in 2005)
- per capita government health expenditure (from US\$4 in 1998 to US\$11 in 2002)

These achievements needed the integrated, multidimensional and combined efforts of civil society, government and development partners. The major factors contributing to these positive changes are: strong and extensive influence of non-governmental organizations with their interaction with indigenous and newly-emerged grass-root community formations resulting in better community advocacy and public decision-making, evolving complementary roles of government and civil society, emergence of private sector, improved focus on marginalised and vulnerable population, improved availability of and access to basic services including health and education etc. Also, the overall blending of pro-poor and pro-women development efforts with major national, regional and local initiatives played an important role. This is extensively evident in the community-based rural development and micro-finance initiatives started in the eighties and nineties. However, Bangladesh still has a long and tortuous trajectory ahead to reach its goals. In addition to improving the health and human development indices to meet the multi-sectoral UN Millennium Development Goals by 2015, Bangladesh needs to sustain the achievement and move forward with focus on the overarching development challenges that include reducing inequalities and social gradients with attention to gender equity and empowerment of women, poverty alleviation, and environmental challenges due to population pressure, arsenic contamination of water and climate change.

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website: <http://som.flinders.edu.au/SACHRU>

AHIP Retreat 2007

In conjunction with the annual AHIP Retreat, a Public Policy Day is held to encourage engagement between researchers and policymakers. This event was held at the Art Gallery in Adelaide on Thursday 1st November and was attended by around 70 guests. The day was split into two half-day focus topics.

The morning session focus was “Public Policy & Social Inequalities in Health” and was chaired by Professor Paul Worley (new Dean of the School of Medicine at Flinders University). Special guest Margaret Whitehead gave a presentation on “*What Kinds of Evidence do Policymakers need to Address Social Inequalities in Health*”. This was followed by presentations by AHIP Investigators Fran Baum, Anne Kavanagh and Rebecca Bentley on “*Why Social Capital Matters to Policy to Address Health Inequities*”, and “*Place Matters for Health: For Whom? In What Context? On What Scale*”. This was followed by discussion from an invited panel consisting of Monsignor David Cappo AO (Commissioner for Social Inclusion in SA), Assoc Prof Gavin Turrell, and Dr Chrissie Pickin (Department of Health, Victoria).

The afternoon session was on “Work, Housing & Health in a Globalising World”. The guest presentation was given by Gavin Turrell on *Occupation and Health in Australia: Temporal Trends, Gender Differences and Policy Implications*. AHIP Chief Investigators Sue Richardson and Andrew Beer presented on “The Changing Workplace as a Public Health Issue”, and “The Housing Careers of Persons with a Disability: Implications for Housing and Health Policy”. The session was chaired by Mr. Danny Broderick (SA Department of Health) and was followed by lively discussion with the audience.

The next AHIP Retreat and Public Policy Day will be in Victoria towards the end of 2008.



L-R: Fran Baum, Sue Richardson, Gavin Turrell, Margaret Whitehead, Andrew Beer, Anne Kavanagh