

USA Section, Dr. Richard Shick, on a Successful Process for Prioritising Projects

Establishing a Public Health Specialty Training Programme in a Third World Country

Opportunities abound. When and where should I.C.D. take on more projects? A two-person committee was appointed to find a project that would permit all Fellows an opportunity to participate in a relevant, rewarding and essential project. By the time this article is published, a decision may have been made on a new proposal. Either way, I believe the information on the Committee's efforts is fascinating and should be shared.

SPONSORS AND ORGANISATION

The American Dental Association is a sponsor of Dentistry Overseas (DO), a division of Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO). This organization provides the opportunity for ADA members to volunteer in both service and teaching assignments for 2-4 weeks in developing countries. Vietnam is one of seven developing countries where ADA members volunteer. Currently programs in the specialties of Orthodontics and Dental Public Health are taught at the Faculty of Odontostomatology (FOS) in Ho Chi Minh City. The FOS is the premier dental school in Vietnam, having been built with the aid of the ADA and the I.C.D. in the early 1970s.

Dental Public Health Courses in Ho Chi Minh City

At the request of the FOS, Health Volunteers Overseas were asked to organize a certificate and Master's level course in Dental Public Health for members of the faculty and dentists already employed in this field throughout the country. As a result of meetings held in Ho Chi Minh City in June 2000, a curriculum was outlined between members of the International Steering Committee and the Department of Dental Public Health at the University of Texas at Houston. They will have 20-25 students who will complete their requirements and thesis in 2-3 years. FOS will host four visiting professors yearly for the core courses.

Professor Martin Hobdell, a world-renowned leader in the field of Dental Public Health will direct curriculum development. Specialists in the field of Dental Public Health from Thailand, Australia, Malaysia, Canada and other countries will combine in a truly collaborative effort to participate in teaching the core courses. In a

country of 80 million people and 1,600 dentists, this course should have a profound impact on the ability of the country to manage its oral health care system and positively impact the health of its citizens.

Budget

The total budget for the two-year curriculum is anticipated at \$25,000, or an average cost of \$1,000 per student. Graduates will receive the equivalent of an MPH degree in Dental Public Health. The I.C.D. could be the sole sponsor of this project.

International Approval

The ADA Council on ADA Sessions and International Programs, as well as the ADA President, have endorsed this new program. If successful, it will serve as a model for collaborative efforts in other developing countries. Neighboring Cambodia is hoping to develop a similar program.

For many countries, this truly international approach to dental education is seen to be an exciting development. I'm very proud of Fellows James Felix and David Sampe for providing this outstanding opportunity to I.C.D. dentists to serve those in need. My hope is that this project will be approved*, and all Fellows will be given the opportunity to support another essential activity that helps this world be healthier and more peaceful for all.

**Dr. Richard S. Shick, DDS MS
President, U.S.A. Section**

Editor's Note: The Public Health training Programme was approved in July 2001, and within three months, the entire programme was funded by voluntary donations from ICD Fellows.

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