

# TRAINING PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

## I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

### **A changing world context**

The world has undergone complex changes in recent years, with profound implications for the health of peoples and for work in health. Globalization – understood as the lifting of geographical constraints on political, economic, social, and cultural structures and practices- has spread. In this open international system, characterized by liberalized trade and economic integration, there is an increase in both the types and quantity of cross-border transactions, with little or no control by the State. In the region of the Americas, these trends are accompanied by the spread of democratization and an expansion of market-oriented economies.

The above changes have had a profound impact on health, in terms of values, opportunities, and risks. The growing mobility of people, goods, services, and information – and the inconsistent quality of national regulatory frameworks designed to protect health - have led to an increase in the transfer of health risks between populations. The relationship between health and socioeconomic development has also become increasingly intertwined and complex. The transformation of health systems is occurring within the context of a re-thinking of the role of the State in which its core responsibilities and the contributions of the various social actors are being clarified.

These trends pose new challenges for international health cooperation and, hence, for the institutions of the international system that are active in the field of health. The technical capabilities of the countries in the Americas have grown enormously in recent years and access to information has been revolutionized. Non-reimbursable financial cooperation has decreased and the number of State, institutional, national, and international actors involved in health has multiplied. Finally, new concerns about the development of human security, consensus building, and the promotion of equity have been added to the traditional mission of solidarity with and assistance to the most vulnerable countries.

Within this context, the purpose of the Training Program in International Health of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is to promote leadership in international health by enabling participants to develop: (1) a broader vision of the evolution of international and regional health trends; (2) a capacity for critical thinking on the main trends and challenges facing countries today; and (3) a more profound understanding of, and capacity for, action in international cooperation in health.

### **The necessary training of leaders**

The Training Program in International Health was established in 1985 as an initiative of the Pan American Health Organization geared toward achieving the goal of Health for All. Its aim is to strengthen the capacity of institutions of the Region and the Member States to (i) analyze the

# TRAINING PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

international and transnational factors that affect their health situation; (ii) design innovative policies and strategies of action, using the experiences of the international community and mobilizing its political, financial, and technical resources; (iii) contribute actively to the work and the agenda of the institutions of the international system; and (iv) develop cooperative relations, projects, and networks among professionals and institutions in the Region.

Every year, the Training Program in International Health receives between eight and ten health professionals from the Americas, who demonstrate leadership and interest in delving more deeply into the international dimensions of health. The training process is based on the participants becoming involved in the work of the Organization through a work-study format for a period of eleven months. The participants are largely responsible for their own training. They are expected to possess the autonomy, enthusiasm, and initiative necessary to become involved in projects that are underway and to take advantage of the available institutional resources inside and outside of PAHO.

## **Programmatic structure**

The Program has three major components. The first component consists of policy formulation and the programming of PAHO/WHO technical cooperation by the Member Governments. The participants attend the working sessions of the Governing Bodies of the Organization; they actively participate in technical discussions with other professionals; and they have the opportunity to listen to national authorities visiting Headquarters and familiarize themselves with the role and duties of the PAHO/WHO Country Offices or Representations.

The second component, which is the most important in terms of the time devoted to it, is the inclusion of the participants in the Organization's technical cooperation activities. The previous work experience of the participants serves as the basis for learning and they join a technical unit that constitutes their area of concentration. In close collaboration with the unit chief and with the assistance of a mentor, they develop a work plan and are integrated into the life of the technical unit. Some examples of activities carried out during the course of the year are: technical meetings at Headquarters and in the countries; the formulation and evaluation of technical cooperation projects; policy or case analysis; the study of "best practices" and technology transfer; joint missions; and training activities. The work in the unit makes it possible for them to establish links with national professionals in the countries visited, document relevant experiences, and contact the country Representative Offices and the specialized centers of the Organization.

The third component is comprised of group activities. This component allows participants a period of critical reflection and analysis based upon their own experiences in which the interaction between the participants themselves, and with other relevant players, becomes the principal means for learning. The topics covered vary from year to year based upon the interests of the participants and current issues in the Region. Nonetheless, the group activities evolve around the following major themes: (1) international technical and financial cooperation in health and development; (2) International health/Global health; (3) regional and global trends affecting health and development; (4) analysis of health systems; and (5) health policy formulation and analysis.

# TRAINING PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

## Major components

### POLICY FORMULATION AND PLANNING

- ◆ Subcommittee on Planning and Programming
- ◆ Executive Committee Meeting
- ◆ Meeting of the Directing Council
- ◆ Meeting of PAHO/WHO Country Representatives and Center Directors

### TECHNICAL COOPERATION (Area of Interest)

- ◆ Health and Human Development
- ◆ Health Systems and Services Development
- ◆ Health and Environment
- ◆ Health Promotion and Protection
- ◆ Disease Prevention and Control
- ◆ Vaccines and Immunization
- ◆ Health Analysis
- ◆ Other relevant programs

### FOCAL ISSUES

- ◆ International Cooperation in Health and Development
- ◆ International/Global Health
- ◆ Regional and Global Trends
- ◆ Analysis of Health Systems
- ◆ Health Policy Formulation and Analysis

## A competency-based approach

The practice of international health is based on the convergence of two fields of activity: public health and international relations. On entering the Training Program in International Health, each participant brings with him/her certain specialized expertise that corresponds to his or her area of interest, education, and experience in public health. This previous professional expertise forms the basis for negotiations with the technical unit on developing a work plan of mutual interest. Although the Program provides an arena that lends itself to the consolidation of that expertise, its educational purpose focuses on strengthening essential spheres of competence that form a core of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are highly relevant to the practice of international health. The three

# TRAINING PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

essential “macro” spheres of competence that the participants will strengthen within the Program are leadership, consulting, and cooperation in an international environment.

## **Terms of participation**

The Training Program in International Health begins every year in late-January and ends in mid-December. Participants in the Program receive a stipend intended to cover their basic living expenses. In addition, participants are provided with a round-trip, economy-class ticket between their country of residence and Washington, DC, and a lump sum settling-in allowance. Participants also receive a subsidy for the purchase of bibliographic materials over the course of the Program. PAHO provides basic health insurance for the participant only. Participation in the Program does not presuppose any future contractual commitment on the part of PAHO. The Organization reserves the right to change the administrative terms of the Program.

## **II. APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES**

### **Eligibility Criteria**

The requirements for participating in the Training Program in International Health are as follows:

- *Education:* Master’s degree in Public Health or an equivalent graduate degree, including the social sciences applied to health.
- *Experience:* Minimum of two years’ experience directing programs, projects, or services, in education, or in public health research.
- *Age:* Age limit of 35 as of application deadline.
- *Nationality:* Candidates must be a permanent resident of one of PAHO’s member countries.
- *Language:* Excellent knowledge of either Spanish or English, with a demonstrated ability to understand, read, write, and express oneself in the other.

### **Application procedures**

The following application documents are required:

- Completed application form
- Copy of birth certificate
- Photocopy of undergraduate diploma(s)
- Photocopy of graduate and/or postgraduate diploma(s)
- Certificate of proficiency in the Spanish language provided by an accredited institution
- Copy of a working paper prepared by the candidate (position paper, consultancy report, research paper, essay, publication, etc.)

# TRAINING PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

- Curriculum vitae
- Letters of recommendation (although not a requirement, they are welcome)
- Letters from the institution where the candidate is currently employed or will be employed endorsing the candidate's participation in the Program (although not a requirement, such letters are welcome)

The above documents may be sent to PAHO Headquarters through the PAHO Office in the candidate's country of residence, or directly to:\*

Training Program in International Health  
Human Resources Development Program  
Division of Health Systems and Services Development  
Pan American Health Organization  
525 Twenty-third St., NW  
Washington, DC 20037-2895  
Tel: (202) 974-3592  
Fax: (202) 974-3612

\*United States citizens should send their applications directly to PAHO Headquarters. Candidates from Canada should send their applications through the Canadian Society for International Health (CSIH), 1105-One Nicholas Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 787 Canada, Tel: (613) 241-5785, Fax: (613) 241-3845, Web: [www.csih.org](http://www.csih.org).

**Please submit application and all documents in duplicate (original plus one copy).**

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| ➤ Deadline for receipt of applications:      | 31 July of each year.               |
| ➤ Date for information of selection results: | Late October of the current year.   |
| ➤ Beginning date of the Program:             | Late-January of the following year. |

## **Evaluation criteria of candidates**

Candidates will be contacted by the PAHO office in their country of residence for an interview, the results of which will be forwarded to PAHO Headquarters in Washington, DC and will serve as input into the selection process.

The criteria considered in the selection of participants are: (1) the quality of the candidate's training and professional experience; (2) the candidate's demonstrated leadership capabilities; (3) the candidate's own perspectives for his or her participation in the Program; and (4) the degree of match between the candidate's profile and the program priorities of the Organization.

# TRAINING PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

## **III. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS**

### **Amount and mode of compensation**

The Training Program in International Health begins in mid-January and ends in mid-December of each year. Each participant is contracted by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) as a Short-Term Professional (STP), and receives a subsistence stipend of US\$2,700.00 for participants without dependents, and US\$3,000.00 for participants with dependents. PAHO reimburses participants who are U.S. residents any taxes for which they are liable on income received from PAHO.

### **Health insurance**

Once the candidate has been selected, he or she must comply with the requirement of a medical examination according to PAHO Staff Rules. PAHO will provide the participant with health insurance for the duration of the contract. However, it should be noted that the health insurance only covers accidents and illness occurring during the course of the Program, but does not cover any pre-existing conditions. In addition, coverage is only provided for the participant and excludes family members.

### **Settling-in expenses**

Selected candidates, with the exception of those already residing in the Washington, DC area at the time of their application, receive a lump sum allowance of approximately \$3,500.00, which is the equivalent to 15 days per diem in Washington, DC to cover their settling-in expenses. The PAHO Office in the country of origin of the participant provides a cash advance equivalent to 80% of the settling-in costs prior to his or her travel to Washington, DC. Settling-in and housing arrangements are the responsibility of the participant; however, the Program Coordination is available to provide participants with information or assistance on these matters.

### **Transportation from and to the country of origin of participants**

Each participant is issued a round trip, economy class ticket from his or her country of residence to Washington, DC. PAHO does not cover travel expenses for family members (spouse, children, or other dependents). The Organization provides the equivalent of up to 10 kg. of excess baggage for the return trip at the end of the contract. Travel insurance is the same as the regular protection provided to PAHO staff.

### **Visas**

The Organization assists participants in obtaining an International Organization visa (G-4) from the United States Government. No participant or his or her family member should travel without a G-4 visa.

# TRAINING PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

## **Book allowance**

During the course of the program, the participant is entitled to an allowance of up to US\$300.00 to cover the purchase of books or instructional materials relevant to the objectives of the Program. These materials should be purchased through the Program Coordination. In addition to the allowance, the Program Coordination will also provide all participants with basic reading materials related to common or group activities.

## **Vacations**

Each participant is entitled to 10 working days of vacation during the course of the Program. Vacation days must be previously authorized by the Coordinator of the participant's Technical Unit and the Program Coordinator. All vacation days must be utilized prior to the termination of the Program and are not reimbursable in cash.

## **Changes to or early cancellation of the Program**

The participant is expected to arrive in Washington, DC on the date indicated to him or her (approximately late-January). He or she commits to actively participate in the activities of the Program to the end (mid-December). The participant commits to dedicate him or herself to the Training Program in International Health on a full-time basis. Any change to the activities of the program by the participant, either because of prior professional commitments, new career opportunities, or individual interests, should be previously discussed both with the Technical Unit to which the participant has been assigned, and with the Program Coordinator. Failure to reach mutual agreement beforehand constitutes a breach of this agreement's duties, rights and obligations. Likewise, early cancellation by the participant of his or her participation in the Program requires justification acceptable to PAHO.

## **Support for strengthening verbal communication skills in the participant's non-native language**

To be admitted into the Program, and to be able to comply satisfactorily with its activities, the participant is required to have sufficient fluency in spoken Spanish and English as well as be able to write in at least one of the two languages. PAHO offers advanced courses, both in English and Spanish in which participants may enroll. It should be noted, however, that to take part in these courses, it is essential to have prior knowledge of the language. PAHO will evaluate the language ability of all participants after arrival to determine their course level.

## **Publications**

Participants are invited to submit reports or articles produced within the context of the Program for eventual publication by PAHO. Any publication resulting from the work performed by the participant during the course of the Program shall explicitly acknowledge this fact, and indicate that the opinions and statements made do not necessarily represent those of PAHO/WHO.

# TRAINING PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

## **Code of ethics**

PAHO is a professional organization that provides technical cooperation to Member Countries in the Americas. It is expected that the participant in the Training Program in International Health maintain a high level of professionalism in his or her relations with colleagues, high technical quality standards, show respect in meetings with national authorities, and duly comply with the standards and rules of the Organization. The participant may not act or speak on behalf of the Organization, or convey the impression that he or she has any authority in this regard or has a contractual relationship with the Organization beyond the specifics of the Program.

## **Other considerations**

It is expected that the participants in the Program will return to their respective countries to cooperate in the development of the institutional capabilities of the health sector. The participant commits to return to his or her country of residence upon completion of the Program, and to provide his or her services at the national level for a period of at least two years. Participation in the Program does not presuppose any future contractual commitment on the part of PAHO. The Organization reserves the right to change the administrative terms of the Program.