

MEKONG REGIONAL IMMUNIZATION TRAINING AND EDUCATION

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Background

Immunization is one of the most efficient and effective public health tools to contribute to the health and development of populations. However, during the 1990s, many countries experienced a gradual decline in the level of investment in the immunization programmes, including their training. AIHI has formed a partnership to address the urgent need for more, better quality immunization training in the Mekong region.

Partners

- Ministry of Public Health in Thailand
- National Immunization Programmes in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar/Burma, Thailand and Vietnam
- Children's Vaccine Programme at PATH (CVP/PATH)



Duration: One year

Goal and Approaches

To improve performance of immunization programme staff at all levels (national, sub-national and service delivery) of the Mekong countries, through activities for:

- **Coordination** - transfer of knowledge and skills within Mekong region bolstered by international and regional support.
- **Capacity building** - self reliance for immunization training and education at country and regional levels
- **Partnership** - ministries of health of the five Mekong countries, WHO, UNICEF, GAVI partners and the AIHI.

Outputs

- Consultation meetings to share ideas among senior level managers
- Training needs assessment for immunization program management and service delivery
- Mekong Region Immunization Forum for Senior Managers
- Plan for immunization leadership programme

Lessons learned

Regional approach has untapped potential - similar disease pattern, common culture and potential for joint action; many opportunities for senior managers to learn from each other (even across WHO boundaries); alliance between the countries can foster new leadership in immunization and peer support.

Ownership – bringing senior managers in **before** any plans are formulated promotes ownership and captures unforeseen ideas that build on existing strong networks in the region; proposals must integrate with country policy and immunization programmes.

Advocacy skills are crucial to successful immunisation programs – senior managers need capacity support for, human resource development and sustainable funding for immunization.

Training approaches need a rethink:

- highest priority management training needs are for skills in **delegation** and **supervision**;
- “training needs assessments” – must examine educational **processes**, and opportunities for skills transfer as well as content
- increasing workforce skills requires innovative alternatives to ‘refresher training workshops’ that are close to the workplace and incorporate **adult learning principles**

Next steps

- Facilitate new senior manager network
- Longer program of regional cooperation

Acknowledgement

Thanks to CVP/PATH and AIHI for funding, Dr Supamit Chunsuttiwat and Dr Prayura Kunasol for strategic advice, Ms Mary Catlin for training needs assessments, Ms Colleen Smith (UniSA) for training method advice; and WHO, UNICEF and GAVI for technical support.

