



## Profile of tropEd

### **tropEd Secretariat**

Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute  
Socinstr. 57  
P.O. Box  
CH - 4002 Basel  
Tel: +41 61 284 8361  
Fax +41 61 284 81 06  
E-mail: [tropEd-sti@unibas.ch](mailto:tropEd-sti@unibas.ch)  
[www.troped.org](http://www.troped.org)

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## 1. DESCRIPTION OF tropEd

**tropEd** is a network of institutions for higher education in International Health. It is a registered association of 29 member institutions from 20 countries collaborating in the provision of training in International Health. Managed by an Executive Committee and a Secretariat, it evolved from TROPMEDEUROP, the association of the Institutes and Schools of Tropical Medicine and International Health in Europe. tropEd provides opportunities for postgraduate education and training contributing to sustainable development. tropEd focuses on improving the management of health services for disadvantaged populations. The innovative approach is based on the mobility of people, the exchange of experiences in different disciplines and the establishment of a common standard in education and training. tropEd seeks to collaborate with other networks and institutions with similar goals.

The tropEd Programme in International Health is characterised by a unique synergy of experience and expertise of leading European institutions and institutions from Asia, Africa, Australia and Latin America. tropEd prepares the graduates of its various members' programmes to work more effectively in a multicultural environment by exposing them to multiple perspectives. tropEd offers a flexible modular structure and the recognition of education achievement world-wide.

**International Health** in the understanding of tropEd focuses on poverty-related health problems in low and middle income countries. It includes the promotion of health, prevention and treatment of diseases, as well as palliative care and rehabilitation. Studies of health systems, health economics, health policy and the management of health services are central. International Health integrates a number of public-health-related disciplines including: anthropology, biology, clinical and nursing sciences, demography, economics, epidemiology, management studies, nutrition, psychology, sociology, statistics, travel and migrant health and tropical medicine. A gender-sensitive approach to health problems and health services analysis is emphasised.

**The concept of partnership** between institutions is central to tropEd. Currently, the initial European partnership is gradually extending to include further institutional partners in Africa, Asia, Australia and Latin America.

**Postgraduate training** is the major focus of tropEd, which aims to contribute to capacity-building through sustainable development of human resources, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, through the promotion of excellence in education and training. Key features include the exchange of teachers, students, knowledge, skills and the encouragement of interdisciplinary approaches.

**At the undergraduate level**, tropEd supports the view that medical education should include training on globally important diseases and their underlying environmental, cultural and socio-economic factors in addition to a main core of national relevance.

**The Masters Programme in International Health** follows a flexible modular framework for full-time or part-time study across member institutions. There are three components to the programme:

- **A taught core course**, which is equivalent to three months full-time study, introduces participants to the principles of International Health.
- **Taught optional advanced modules** selected according to the needs and experience of participants, equivalent to three to six months full-time and designed for maximum flexibility with a vocational emphasis suitable for a range of careers in International

Health. Guidance in the choice of modules and institutions and the research project is provided by a personal tutor.

- **A research project**, submitted as a dissertation, is equivalent to a minimum of three months full-time work.

The three components will be completed in a minimum of one year (full-time) to a maximum of five years (part-time). Successful completion of these components leads to a Masters degree awarded by the institution where the participant initially registers or by a consortium of institutions as a joint or multiple degree.

**tropEd recognition** of Masters level training is a statement about standards in education and training in the member institutions, since all courses are subject to external quality control. Eligibility for tropEd recognition demands that participants:

- study in a minimum of two member institutions in different countries and
- have at least two years of field experience in low and middle-income countries or an equivalent professional experience by the time tropEd recognition is requested.

**Collaboration** of this type within Europe increases the number of institutions able to participate in educational programmes at Masters level. It also ensures that participating institutions are able to teach in their areas of excellence. Increasingly, components of the programme are offered by institutions in low and middle-income countries.

**Selection of participants** is guided by emphasis on a multidisciplinary approach to International Health. Students are recruited from a variety of backgrounds, including medical doctors and nurses with an interest in public health and tropical medicine, social scientists, health educators and promoters and health managers.

**Approaches to Learning** are varied. The focus is on adult learning and emphasises a problem-based learning approach. Staff within member institutions facilitate learning by providing materials, giving guidance and organising adequate learning opportunities that may take the form of seminars, tutorials, field visits, group work, practicals and lectures. Development and utilisation of open and distance learning is likely to play a key role as the initiative progresses.

## 1.1. Aims

In the field of International Health, tropEd aims to contribute to the sustainable development of human resources, particularly in low and middle-income countries through:

- promoting excellence in education and training;
- facilitating exchange of knowledge and skills;
- encouraging interdisciplinary approaches;
- fostering mobility and the exchange of teachers and students.

## 1.2. Objectives

Within participating institutions, the specific objectives of tropEd are to:

- establish common standards in postgraduate education and training;
- set common criteria for quality assessment;

- promote the use of flexible modular programmes in International Health teaching and training;
- stimulate curriculum development, course design and the creation of new modules, courses and awards;
- achieve mutual recognition of courses and modules;
- increase students' access to courses without compromising quality;
- assist students' mobility;
- encourage the continuing professional development of teachers;
- develop mechanisms for the exchange of teachers;
- promote collaboration in the development and exchange of training materials;
- encourage participation from disciplines other than the health sciences and medicine.
- encourage further collaboration with partners from Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

## 2. tropEd ORGANISATION

tropEd has three types of members: Institutional full members, collaborating institutions and individual members. To be a full member, an institution needs to offer at least one course or module to the tropEd Masters Programme and be recognised as an institution of higher education by a national authority. Other institutions of relevance to International Health, including those which may offer specific courses of interest to the network, but are not institutes of higher education, may join as collaborating institutions. Individuals who are active in and/or provide relevant contributions to the tropEd Network, may join the association as individual members. Current tropEd members are listed in the annex.

### 2.1. Member Institutions

The success of the initiative is dependent on the continuing commitment of each member institution, particularly through the persons identified as the authorised representatives and their named substitutes.

To gain and maintain membership, each institution agrees to:

- subscribe to the definition of International Health as agreed by tropEd and promote the work and purpose of the association;
- provide evidence on its work experience in low- and middle-income countries;
- offer courses or modules consistent with the objectives of the Masters Programme in International Health as approved by the tropEd General Assembly;
- obtain institutional approval for courses to be offered to tropEd;
- facilitate evaluation visits by representatives of the General Assembly and/or the Executive Committee;
- provide a regular update of courses and modules to be offered under tropEd;
- assess student performance in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS);
- pay an annual membership fee as decided by the General Assembly to support the aims of the network;
- admit participants to courses or modules;
- if offering a core course, facilitate the education of students in other institutions;
- provide an agreed level of support to tropEd students;
- agree to the ethical guidelines accepted by the tropEd network;
- have an equal opportunities policy;
- participate fully in appeals from participants;
- issue transcripts or other certificates to successful participants in tropEd-approved

- courses;
- participate regularly in General Assembly meetings;
- provide the Secretariat with relevant information about students in the tropEd Masters Programme in International Health and other information necessary to facilitate their education, subject to current data protection legislation;
- contribute to the preparation of grant proposals or other documentation required for the application of support for tropEd activities.

To ensure a wide coverage of the subject area of International Health and interdisciplinary collaboration, tropEd institutions are encouraged to increase the exchange of staff, examiners and students.

### **2.1.1. Admission of Members**

Institutions and individuals with substantial work experience in low and middle-income countries offering postgraduate training programmes in International Health are invited to join tropEd. Formal applications to join the network are to be directed to the Executive Committee via the Secretariat or via a member institution.

The General Assembly designates one of the members of the Executive Committee or an experienced member of the General Assembly to visit and evaluate the educational programme and training facilities of the institution on-site and present a report to the General Assembly. The General Assembly accepts or rejects the applicant as a full member or Collaborating Institution. The new member pays the full membership fee for the year in which it joins the network.

### **2.1.2. Exclusion of Members**

Members are expected to participate regularly in General Assembly meetings and to be in regular contact with the Secretariat. Institutions which do not participate in any of the activities or meetings or which have not paid their membership fee during the period of one year will receive a reminder from the Executive Committee through the Secretariat and will be regarded as having withdrawn from the network if no satisfactory response is given within three months. Normally, members that do not offer courses or modules during two consecutive academic years will be excluded as full members, but may continue as Collaborating Institutions.

## **2.2. Collaboration with other Institutions, Networks and Associations**

tropEd collaborates with other institutions, networks and associations in the field of International Health. It assists in the development of partner networks in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America according to guidelines set out by the General Assembly.

## **2.3. Management**

### **2.3.1. General Assembly**

Members of the General Assembly are:

- authorised representatives from each institutional member of tropEd (with one vote per institution);
- representatives from each Collaborating Institution (without voting rights);
- individual members (without voting rights);
- other individuals may be invited to the General Assembly as observers (without voting rights).

The General Assembly has the following functions:

- meet not less than twice per year;
- admit and exclude members;
- elect the Executive Committee;
- decide on policies and procedures of the tropEd Masters Programme in International Health;
- decide and oversee the annual work plan and budget as prepared by the Executive Committee;
- receive the annual report including the financial report from the Executive Committee;
- give effectual discharge to the Executive Committee after receiving the audit report;
- decide on membership fees;
- establish eligibility criteria for tropEd recognition of courses and modules;
- oversee the process of accreditation of new member institutions and of continuing accreditation of existing members;
- work with member institutions to establish a suitable process for the governance of tropEd-recognised courses and to ensure that quality criteria are met;
- appoint working groups for specific tasks (standing committees or task forces);
- receive and approve reports of working groups.

### **2.3.2. Executive Committee**

Members of the Executive Committee are:

- the President;
- the President-Elect;
- the past President;
- the Executive Secretary;
- ex-officio.

The Executive Secretary also serves as treasurer of the association and supervises the Secretariat.

The President is elected from among the full members at the General Assembly one year prior to taking office. He or she will become a member of the Executive Committee for three years: one as President-Elect; one as President and one as past President. No person may be elected as President who has directly before acted as President, President-Elect or past President for two successive periods of office. The Executive Secretary and the ex-officio of the Executive Committee are elected at a regular meeting of the General Assembly from among all members for the period of three years and can be re-elected without restriction.

Decisions of the Executive Committee are taken with simple majority of votes of all members. There must be at least three members of the Executive Committee to represent the association. The Executive Committee is accountable to the General Assembly.

The Executive Committee has the following functions:

- manage the association;
- execute decisions of the General Assembly;
- administrate the association's assets;
- summon the General Assembly;
- prepare the annual work plan, budget and annual report for submission to the General Assembly;
- appoint working groups for specific tasks and receives their report;
- promote the concept and purpose of the tropEd Network internationally and liaise with relevant organisations such as the European Commission, the World Health Organization, the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region, the Federation of the European Societies for Tropical Medicine and International Health and other organisations as deemed appropriate.

### **2.3.3. Working Groups**

Working groups in the form of standing committees or task forces with at least one General Assembly member may be constituted on specific topics. They are created and dissolved as required by the General Assembly or by the Executive Committee. The chair of a working group is responsible for providing the General Assembly or Executive Committee with written documentation of the group's conclusions.

### **2.3.4. Secretariat**

The Secretariat has the following functions:

- assist the Executive Committee in all of its tasks and specifically in the preparation of the General Assembly and Executive Committee meetings and of their agenda and in archiving their records of minutes;
- execute the decisions and recommendations of the General Assembly and/or of the Executive Committee;
- assist the Executive Committee in preparation of the annual work plan, budget and annual report for the programme for submission to the General Assembly;
- work with member institutions to establish a suitable process for the governance of tropEd-recognised courses and modules and to ensure that quality criteria are met;
- receive and process proposed courses within the tropEd Masters Programme in International Health from all participating institutions;
- co-ordinate the accreditation and evaluation of institutions and of courses or modules according to the principles established by the General Assembly and convey the decisions of the General Assembly in writing to the evaluated institutions;
- compile and advertise all recognised courses and modules and maintain and facilitate communication amongst the students in the tropEd Masters Programme in International Health;
- act as first contact point for students and scholars interested in participating in the tropEd teaching programme;
- maintain records of student numbers and distribution;
- maintain administrative links with donors and other institutions;
- maintain and facilitate the communication and dissemination of information among all participating institutions and individual members;
- Promote the concept of tropEd internationally and liaise with the relevant international associations and organisations as deemed appropriate.

The Secretariat may, from time to time, delegate functions to tropEd member institutions.



### 3. PARTICIPATION OF INSTITUTIONS

#### 3.1. Assessment and Course Eligibility

An institution may submit a module or course to the tropEd Secretariat according to the following procedure:

- The institutional representative shall submit the requested documentation to the Secretariat with the approval of the local course or module convener. Up to two inter-network peer reviewers will be appointed to establish whether the course or module fulfills tropEd criteria in terms of student-time investment, awarded credits, objectives, assessment and content. Due consideration will be given to any national external quality assessment that may be in force.
- For core courses, at least one inter-network reviewer will visit the institution when the respective course is running if such a visit has not been done within 5 years prior to offering a new core course. The applying institution is responsible for meeting the travel and subsistence costs of the reviewer(s).
- The Secretariat may reject a course without sending it for peer review if the minimum eligibility requirements have not been met.
- The General Assembly will make a final decision on acceptance of the course or module based on the report of the reviewer(s) and a discussion with the course convener (institutional representative).
- The decision on course accreditations is recorded in four categories:
  - Category 1: Accredited. The module will be included in the course list on the tropEd website (prospectus) and in the tropEd database of courses without delay.
  - Category 2: Accepted with minor changes. The revised course/module description will be sent to the tropEd Secretariat accompanied by a statement describing which changes have been made. The tropEd Executive Committee (EC) will review the new course description for final accreditation during a phone conference. Once accredited, the module will be included in the course list on the tropEd website and in the tropEd database of courses. The EC will inform tropEd members at the next GA meeting about all modules which have been accredited since the last GA meeting.
  - Category 3: Accepted with major changes. Re-submission to the GA is necessary. The revised course/module description will be sent to the tropEd Secretariat accompanied by a statement describing the changes which have been made.
  - Category 4: Rejected. A completely new submission to the GA is necessary.
- Institutional representatives will be required to re-submit the appropriate documentation for review every 5 years, or at any time when major modifications are made to a module or course.
- The course or module accreditation process is documented in relevant minutes.
- An independent external reviewer can be appointed by the Executive Committee to arbitrate on disagreement among internal reviewers.

#### 3.2. Training of Trainers

tropEd has an active policy to assist course conveners and other teachers to improve their teaching skills. Training of Trainers workshops are held periodically. tropEd representatives should also encourage local teachers to attend appropriate staff development sessions in their own or other institutions.

### 3.3. Promotion of tropEd

The Secretariat is responsible for the production and dissemination of information describing the tropEd network and the approved provision. All institutions hold and distribute application forms upon request and link the tropEd website with the institutional websites. Information on tropEd shall be included in the promotional materials of full member and collaborating institutions. Members of the General Assembly are expected to take promotional materials to conferences and other national or international events for dissemination. Updated information on tropEd is compiled on the tropEd web site, at <[www.troped.org](http://www.troped.org)>

## 4. MASTERS PROGRAMME IN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

### 4.1. Description of the Masters Programme

The Masters Programme in International Health, a flexible, modular programme offered across member institutions is intended for completion within a minimum of one year (full-time) up to a maximum of five years. Students normally carry out their studies as follows:

- register with the home institution that will provide tutorship throughout the students' education;
- complete a tropEd-recognised core course, equivalent to 3 months of full-time study, usually in one institution;
- successful students select optional advanced modules that have to be undertaken at least two different partner institutions and collectively are equivalent to 3 to 6 months of full-time study;
- students carry out a research project submitted as a dissertation that is equivalent to a further 3 to 6 months of full-time study, normally at their home institution;
- the core course should be completed within one year of registration; optional modules within two years and the research project completed and submitted within two years; in case of a full-time track-based programme, all three stages must be successfully completed in one year (normally September to August);
- students obtain a masters degree from the home institution or a student will obtain a multiple or joint degree from a consortium of tropEd-recognised institutions; to obtain a Masters degree, all three stages must be successfully completed.

The European Credit and Transfer System (ECTS) facilitates transfer of course credits between institutions at the same academic level. tropEd member institutions need to adopt the ECTS in the courses that are offered in the network. A student work load of 30 hours formal teaching and private study (student-investment time, SIT) is equivalent to 1.0 ECTS credit points. A full working week can not have more than 45 hours SIT. tropEd course evaluators advise the institutions and the General Assembly or Executive Committee on the correct credit level for approved courses and modules.

## 2. Home Institutions

Home institutions - as defined by tropEd - must meet the following criteria:

1. offer a core course in line with the criteria given under 4.3. of this document and accredited by tropEd;
2. act as an entry point for students into the tropEd Masters Programme;

3. be able to deliver a Masters degree in International Health according to the criteria defined in this document;
4. deliver guidance, support and counselling services to students in the tropEd Masters Programme.

### 4.3. Core Training

The core course has three main objectives:

- to provide knowledge and skills based on basic principles and concepts in International Health, irrespective of the subsequent specialisation;
- to provide a common culture and shared philosophy for tropEd students.

The core course duration in weeks is calculated on the basis of full-time study. The core is equivalent to a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 20 ECTS credit points (540 - 600 hours SIT).

Core training offered by different institutions must be sufficiently consistent in objectives and content to guarantee a common understanding and approach to key issues. Participating institutions wishing to offer a core course must be prepared to adapt existing teaching or develop new modules, where necessary, to meet the following curricular criteria:

CORE COURSE CONTENT	WEEKS
<u>Introduction and Orientation</u>	0.5 weeks
<u>Methodology</u> Epidemiology Statistics Social science – concepts and methods Research methods and tools	3 to 5 weeks
<u>The Health System</u> Health policy/planning Health economics Information, Education, Communication Management	3 to 5 weeks
<u>Health Problems</u> Major endemic diseases Childhood/nutrition Sexual and reproductive health Adult health and violence Environmental health Health in Transition	3 to 5 weeks

### 4.4. Optional Advanced Modules

The list of optional advanced modules offers maximum flexibility with a vocational emphasis suitable for a range of careers in International Health. Participants select modules according

to needs, guided by a personal tutor.

One-year full-time students follow one of the following pre-defined study tracks within 12 months:

- Tropical Medicine and Disease Control;
- Health Systems, Health Policy and Management;
- Sexual and Reproductive Health;
- Child Health;
- Health Research Methods.

Optional advanced modules must total 20-25 ECTS credit points (600-750 hours SIT) of which a minimum of 10 credits (300 hours SIT) must be earned in member institutions in a country other than that of the home institution. A maximum of 5 ECTS credit points may be obtained from distance-based advanced optional modules.

## **4.5. Research Project**

The research project, equivalent to 15-20 ECTS credit points (450-600 hours SIT), may cover a wide range of topics and formats, ranging from experimental design, primary data collection, to policy analysis, and may be field- and/or laboratory-based. Each student has a designated supervisor with relevant experience in the chosen topic.

Guidelines for the supervision, assessment and other project requirements follow the internal regulations of the institution at which the research is carried out and submitted. These will meet tropEd eligibility and quality criteria. Assessment should involve an external examiner not belonging to the institution that supervises the thesis. The title, abstract and author of each thesis will be published on the tropEd web site.

## **4.6. Tuition Fees**

Module and course fees follow regulations current in the local institution.

# **5. STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION**

## **5.1. Application and Admission**

Prospective students apply directly to a tropEd home institution that is responsible for selection, assignment of tutorial support and advice on course options.

To obtain tropEd recognition of the Masters training participants must:

- register with a tropEd home institution;
- be bound by the ordinances and regulations current in the institutions providing training.

## **5.2. Assessment of Students Performance**

Each student following an approved course or module is subject to summative assessment related to that course or module. The summative assessment programme will be defined

and approved by the home institution and/or the consortium of tropEd member institutions offering a multiple or joint degree. The General Assembly and/or Executive Committee through its Quality Assurance Standing Committee monitors the assessment process and its quality periodically in order to define equivalence across institutions.

The pass mark in assessed work should be defined by the home institution and/or the consortium of tropEd member institutions offering a multiple or joint degree. A participant who fails to achieve a pass mark in a summative assessment will normally be allowed at least one re-assessment, according to procedures operating in the home institution. The grade report and transcript of the participant shall record the grade awarded by the institution delivering the course according to ECTS regulations together with the local grade obtained. Details of assessments must be made explicit by all institutions offering modules or courses.

Each student has full access to academic and general appeal procedures.

### **5.3. Recognition by tropEd**

To obtain tropEd recognition of a Masters degree in International Health resulting from participation in the tropEd Masters programme and awarded by one of the member institutions, a student must achieve:

- a total of minimum 60 ECTS credit points (1800 hours SIT) from a combination of taught and research components defined as eligible (accredited) by tropEd;
- mobility through completion of courses in at least two institutions in different countries, with at least 10 taught credit points (300 hours SIT) outside the home institution's country (distance or e-learning modules are not considered "foreign credits");
- not more than 5 credits obtained via distance or e-learning;
- a number of credits obtained (based on grade reports) for an accredited core course (20 credits), accredited advanced modules (20-25 credits) and a thesis (15-20 credits);
- a pass marks for all modules and research project (thesis);
- a masters degree that is obtained from a home institution;
- completion of the masters programme (based on the date the degree is awarded) within 5 years from the date of first registration in a tropEd-accredited course or module;
- at least two years of relevant professional experience of which at least one year in low and middle-income countries/societies (latter based on employer statements);
- the presence of an external examiner (thesis defence or oral exam) or an external thesis supervisor (name and institutional affiliation)

## **4. Student Representation**

Elected tropEd student representatives are regularly invited to actively participate in General Assembly Meetings and in all of its ad-hoc task forces.

### **5.5. Scholarship and Students' Support**

Participating institutions are encouraged to look for total or partial financial support for tropEd

students. The Secretariat – with support from the member institutions - will focus on international organisations such as the United Nations, here specifically the World Health Organization, or the European Union in attempts to secure financial support, while member institutions will approach their national organisations and governments.

## **5.6. Welfare and Accommodation**

Information on accommodation, health care, travel, insurance requirements, local taxes, entry and visa requirements, safety etc., are sent in advance to all students by each institution involved in their training. Institutions will make every effort to facilitate accommodation for students in advance of their arrival. Each institution has a designated member of staff who should be the first point of contact for tropEd students. The tutor assigned to a student at the home institution should liaise with the tutor at any other institution where studies will be undertaken as well as with the Secretariat.

## **5.7. Information about tropEd**

Regularly updated information on tropEd is available on the web site at <[www.troped.org](http://www.troped.org)>. Enquiries may be directed to the tropEd Secretariat or to any tropEd member institution.

## **ANNEX: Partner Institutions – Full Members**

### Belgium

- Prince Leopold Institute for Tropical Medicine, Antwerpen

### Denmark

- Copenhagen School of Global Health, University of Copenhagen

### France

- Bordeaux School of Public Health, Université Victor Segalen, Bordeaux II

### Germany

- Institut für Tropenmedizin und Internationale Gesundheit, Charité - Universitätsmedizin, Humboldt und Freie Universität, Berlin
- Institute of Public Health, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg

### Italy

- Clinica di Malattie Infettive e Tropicali, Università degli Studi di Brescia

### Mexico

- Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública

### Netherlands

- Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, Amsterdam

### Norway

- Centre for International Health, University of Bergen

### Portugal

- Instituto de Higiene e Medicina Tropical, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

### Spain

- Institute for Global Health of Barcelona, Universidad de Barcelona

### Sweden

- Division of Global Health, Department of Public Health Sciences, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm
- Department of Women's and Children's Health, Uppsala University

### Switzerland

- Schweizerisches Tropen- und Public Health-Institut, Basel

### United Kingdom

- Institute for International Health and Development, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- Institute for Global Health, University College London

## **ANNEX: Partner Institutions - Collaborating Institutions**

### Australia

- School of Population Health, The University of Queensland

### Bolivia

- Universidad Mayor de San Simón

### China

- Tongji Medical College, Huazhong University of Science and Technology
- School of Public Health, Fudan University

### Germany

- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
- Medical Mission Institute Würzburg

### Indonesia

- Faculty of Medicine, Gadjah Mada University

### Spain

- Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

### Sweden

- Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine, Umeå University

### Tanzania

- Muhimbili University

### Thailand

- Faculty of Public Health, Khon Kaen University

### Vietnam

- Hanoi School of Public Health