

## WORKSHOP 7: TRAINING OF PROFESSIONALS

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The Workshop on Training (as well as on other topics in leprosy control) has been a standard feature at the International Leprosy Congress for many years.

The Workshop on Training of Professionals in Leprosy prior to the 14th ILA Congress was attended by trainers from all parts of the world. Twenty papers were presented during the Workshop.

With reference to the global multidrug therapy (MDT) situations, the Workshop reviewed the current status of training in various areas. The Workshop made some recommendations to ensure that training activities were more effective and efficient in assisting the leprosy control programs toward the goal of eliminating leprosy by the year 2000.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the Workshop were: 1) to review the present status of the training activities for the professionals in leprosy in the world; 2) to identify important unresolved issues in the training of professionals in leprosy; 3) to recommend guidelines for approaches to resolve these issues.

### **Review of progress**

During the last 5 years, progress has been made in the field of training in the following areas:

**Approach in learning and evaluation methods:** Learning in leprosy is moving mainly from subject to task orientation us-

ing problem-based, student-centered methods.

**Emphasis on curricula priorities:** In addition to the basics of clinical leprosy and control, many training programs are realizing the need to include better management training, more emphasis on communication skills, training in the prevention of disabilities and health system research.

**Training of trainers:** In recognition of the need to upgrade the educational skills of trainers, some workshops were organized at national and international levels.

**Production of materials:** The use of modular training material has increased. Local production and adaptation has been encouraged. In some countries, materials have been produced for undergraduate health care workers.

### **Recommendations**

Although progress has been made in the areas mentioned above, the Workshop participants feel it is essential to continue to strengthen and consolidate what has already been achieved. The following recommendations are made for the future of the training of professionals in leprosy:

**Approach in learning and evaluation methods:** a) strengthening of the problem-based, task-oriented approach to learning needs to be continued. Education should be continuous. Learning can continue in the field using self learning materials, distance learning, training follow up and feedback.

b) There should be a multidisciplinary team approach to training.

Emphasis on curricular priorities: a) Training needs to be tailored to program needs, e.g., in areas where MDT coverage is low, emphasis could be placed on implementation of MDT, early detection and complete treatment. In some areas, courses held in special training centers can be shortened. In areas of high MDT coverage, training could concentrate on prevention of disabilities, vocational training and all aspects of rehabilitation. The hidden program needs, which are often neglected, should be emphasized, such as patient education, communication skills, management and psychosocial aspects. As we move toward the elimination of leprosy, it will be necessary to develop appropriate training strategies to cope with integration, e.g., training primary health care workers, medical students, combined TB-leprosy courses and community-based rehabilitation. This will involve the production of materials and training modules for undergraduates in medical fields.

Training of trainers: a) Training capacity can be multiplied through training of trainers. Specialized centers should equip regional training teams to pass on their knowledge and skills. b) Training centers should be linked so that there is a networking of expertise and sharing of developments and ideas. This may entail the identification of global coordinating centers.

Production of materials: a) Appropriate training materials need to be produced. The distribution of these materials needs to be rationalized.

Selection of students: a) This is an area that needs to be looked into. We would recommend that a criteria for selection be drawn up by centers. Selection of trainees should be based on local needs.

All of these recommendations depend on an increase in resources, which will necessitate a channeling of funds into training and material production.