

Strengthening Capacity for Project Management in Health Research

The UWI's Clinical Epidemiology Unit (UWI-CEU) located in the Epidemiology Research Unit (ERU) of the Tropical Medicine Research Institute (TMRI), in collaboration with the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), the International Centre for Medical Training and Research (CIDEIM), and the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), will host: a three and half day training workshop in Effective Project Planning and Evaluation for Biomedical Research (EPPE) for 12 researchers and research administrators from August 23-26, 2010. This initial workshop will target recipients of the principal's research initiative awards and will also involve participants from St Georges University, School of Medicine in Grenada. The activities are in line with the recently approved PAHO Policy on Research for Health that promotes strengthening skills and capacities for the health research workforce.

The trainers are members of staff in the ERU who were trained in EPPE and later as trainers in November 2009 and April 2010 respectively. As this is the first course offered by the ERU team, they will be supported by an experienced trainer from CIDEIM.

The WHO/TDR Initiative "Planning for Success" was established in 2003 to support skill-building for project management in health research in developing countries. As part of the initial phase, WHO/TDR has developed and tested a training programme which includes two main components: a skill-building course for effective project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and a train-the trainer course to ensure availability of local trainers.

The workshop will enable researchers to clearly define projects, complete realistic project development plans, identify and support the expertise and responsibilities of team members as well as to create a communication plan to ensure successful collaborations. According to the organizers, the objective is to facilitate successful implementation, monitoring and reporting of projects, eventually contributing to increased competitiveness for funding.

The EPPE dissemination initiative promotes country-driven training and local ownership; its success thus depends on the level of leadership that institutions develop. CIDEIM, as a TDR Regional Training Center for Health Research, has facilitated the introduction of the methodology in 5 academic and research institutions in Colombia, and has expanded training to Honduras, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala and Jamaica. To date, 235 investigators and research personnel and 28 trainers have been trained in Latin America, the Caribbean and the United States, as well as 112 researchers and 15 trainers in Africa.

The UWI-CEU comprises the ERU in the TMRI, UWI and colleagues from the Faculties of Medical Sciences and Social Sciences and the Centre for Gender and Development Studies of the UWI. Together, they have been admitted to the International Clinical Epidemiology Network (INCLLEN) as a Clinical Epidemiology Unit (CEU) of the Canada/ USA International Clinical Epidemiology Network (CanUSACLEN) branch of INCLLEN. The launch of the UWI-CEU places the UWI among seven (7) regional networks and eighty-two (82) Clinical Epidemiology Units in twenty (24) countries. This will enhance opportunities for the Caribbean to advance the development of its human resources and increase capacity in health research and leadership training in the region.

Additional information on the initiative can be obtained from the following website:

http://bit.ly/TDR_PAHO_CIDEIM