

**An Annual Report
of
The International Forum for
Social Sciences in Health**

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**Secretariat : International Forum for Social Sciences in Health,
Mahidol University, Salaya Campus, Nakornpathom 73170,
Thailand**

Fax no. (662) 441-9738, (662) 441-0252, (662) 519-2951

A 1994 Secretariat Report of the International Forum for Social Sciences in Health (IFSSH)

1 April 1994 - 31 May 1995

This report is to provide a year round accomplishment of IFSSH Secretariat based at Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand during 1 April 1994 to 31 May 1995. The year of 1994 was a third active year of IFSSH organization primarily functioning the global networking of health and social scientists towards the improvement of people's health. Five major initiatives of IFSSH including capacity building, institutional strengthening, research, networking and promotion of social sciences in health, have been developed and translated into actual operations in several regional task force networks of Africa, Asia-the Pacific, Latin America-the Carribbeans, Europe and North America. The operations of 1994 offer the establishment of three regional networks of social sciences and health in developing countries and also lead to directions for the activities in 1995 onwards. The following presentation will highlight the activities of the Secretariat roles and tasks during the 14 months.

With a prime commitment of IFSSH members including members of Steering Committee (SC), Management Team (MT) and friends of IFSSH, the Secretariat have achieved the following activities in five areas.

1. Establishment of regional networks in social sciences and health,
2. Coordination of the global network,
3. Promotion of social science applications to health,
4. Preparation of funding proposal for IFSSH global tasks, and
5. Administration of global Secretariat.

1. Establishment of Regional Network :

In its efforts to network scholars, researchers and students in social sciences and health across regions, IFSSH Secretariat worked through the contributions of SC and MT. Three regional networks of health social sciences have been formally established in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin-America and the Carribbeans. Four regional conferences and meetings which were arranged by IFSSH SC members, regional coordinators and in collaboration with the Secretariat, produced a ground of discussions, exchanging views, networking among local researchers and importantly forming a network in each respective region. These establishments and networkings have been possible through the following meetings/conferences.

1.1 The regional planning meeting of African Regional Task Force (RTF) held in Nairobi, Kenya, during 3-7 January 1994.

1.2 The scientific conference of Latin-America and the Carribbeans RTF Network convened in Caracas, Venezuela, 3-6 May 1994.

1.3 The launch of the Asia-Pacific RTF Network in coordination to the Asia-Pacific Second Social Science & Medicine Conference in Quezon City, Philippines, 23-27 May 1994.

1.4 The launch of the African RTF Network in collaboration with the Second Social Science & Medicine Africa Network (SOMA-Net) Conference in Douala, Cameroon, 1-7 October 1994

On January 3-7, 1994, in Nairobi, Kenya, IFSSH Secretariat brought members of MT (Drs. Roberto Briceno-Leon, Mary-Jo Good and Paul Nkwi) to facilitate a regional planning meeting of African RTF to conclude the guidelines of a network in the African region. Dr. Joseph Wang'ombe who is a chairman of SOMA-Net, and Dr. Paul Nkwi serving as a MT member, were organizers of the planning meeting. Another prime mover was Dr. Layi Erinosho who also presented at the meeting. The results of the meeting offered a plan in recruiting additional regional members and also to launch a African RTF Network during the Second SOMA-Net Conference in Douala, Cameroon, in October 1994.

On May 3-6, 1994, in Caracas, Venezuela, IFSSH Secretary and Dr. Paul Nkwi, a member of MT, presented at the scientific conference of Latin America and the Carribbeans, in order to support the establishment of the RTF in the region. With the leadership of Dr. Roberto Briceno-Leon and Dr. Ellen Hardy, IFSSH SC members announced the impressive success in establishing the Latin American and the Carribbeans Network. Around 40 participants from countries in the region attended the conference, and about 15 persons were nominated at the conference, and are serving as regional steering committee of the regional network.

On May 23-27, 1994, in Quezon City, Philippines, global Secretary of IFSSH held an annual (2nd) SC business meeting in conjunction to the Asia-Pacific Second Social Science & Medicine Conference. The arrangement was made to support the launching of Asia-Pacific Network of IFSSH. Eleven SC members (out of thirteen) participated in the activities and facilitated the formation of regional initiatives, including substantive activities for capacity building and interdisciplinary dialogue. Dr. Nick Higginbotham who was selected as an interim Secretariat of the region, directed with strong efforts to carry this regional challenge into a new phase of the networking activities for the region. Fund raising and funding proposal to promote regional activities was planned. A success of this formation of Asia-Pacific Network of IFSSH was credited to the leadership of the interim Secretary.

On October 1-7, 1994 in Douala, Cameroon, IFSSH Secretary participated the meeting of African RTF held in collaboration with the Second Social Science & Medicine Africa Network (SOMA-Net). The establishment of the African RTF was due to the combined efforts of Drs. Joseph Wang'ombe and Paul Nkwi. Their leadership and strong commitment of these two SC members attracted a number of African scholars to address several important health issues, and a need to networking for the people with common interests. This led to a formation of 12 regional steering committee for the African RTF. Plans for future were discussed and they included establishment of local chapters, involvement in research findings and guidelines on the state-of-the-art papers. The Cameroon conference also opened an opportunity to the initiative of a new regional network, i.e., the Middle East. It is imperative of IFSSH to extend the same initiatives to flourish as in other regions or professional groups. As IFSSH's commitment, the Secretariat will continue to help build the regional networks of social sciences and health wherever the demand and initiative arised.

2. Coordination of Global Network :

As stated in its initiative goals, IFSSH is an international organization, which focuses on networking activities for scholars of health and social sciences across regions. In 1994 the IFSSH Secretariat continued to sustain a number of global colloquy to enhance communication magnitude among its members and share experience of social science application to improving health. As one of the important duties, the Secretariat held an annual (2nd) Steering Committee meeting, to foster the initiatives of new regional networks, and involve with global efforts of health networks. The accomplishments of the activities mentioned have been made through the followings :

2.1 The 12th Conference of International Clinical Epidemiology Network (INCLEN), Chiangmai, Thailand, 22-26 January 1994.

2.2 The Second Steering Committee Meeting of IFSSH, Quezon City, Philippines, 22-26 May 1994.

2.3 The 13th Social Science & Medicine Conference, Balatonfured, Hungary, 10-14 October 1994.

At INCLEN Conference in Chiangmai, Thailand, during 22-26 January 1994, IFSSH Secretary exchanged a possibility to enhance collaboration among the international health networks, including INCLEN Health Social Science group, PUEBLO network and a forum of international AIDS network. These joint ventures should help IFSSH build strong links between scholars, providers and decision-makers in health fields.

As its business meeting of the Second SC Meeting in Quezon City, Philippines during 22-26 May 1994, IFSSH organizational principles and structure including a discussion of an IFSSH constitution, membership principles, termship of SC and substantive activities, was thoroughly exchanged and formulated. (see the Proceeding of the 2nd SC Meeting of IFSSH).

In order to aid in linking health and social scientists across regions and countries, IFSSH Secretary and some SC members attended the 13th International Conference of Social Sciences & Medicine in Hungary. IFSSH had an opportunity to present its main functions and concerns to the audience of the conference. Other mandates also included a mobilization of scholars interested in IFSSH networking initiatives in three regions, i.e., Europe, North America and the Middle East. Drs. Mary-Jo Good and Yvo Nuyens, together with assistance from funding agencies, created a group of potential prime movers in these respective regions. An important milestone of the global network of IFSSH was an establishment of the collaboration between Social Science & Medicine Journal and IFSSH. A special reduction of the Journal for IFSSH members was tentatively outlined. Other global networkings included a planning dialogue of the IFSSH Asia-Pacific Network Conference, a draft of IFSSH funding tasks, and a plan for the 3rd annual SC meeting.

3. Promotion of Social Sciences Application to Health :

In response to the initiative of IFSSH, the Secretary supported a variety of discussions, seminars and meetings on application of social sciences to health at national and international levels. The involvements of IFSSH Secretary are as follows :

3.1 attended as a member a subcommittee of Social Sciences and Humanities on Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), Thailand National Research Council, Bangkok, Thailand, 15 February 1994.

3.2 participated through the Rockefeller Foundation support; "The International Workshop on Community Based Methodologies and Dengue Prevention, from Theory to Practice," in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, 6-9 March 1994.

3.3 participated as a committee member; "An Inter Health Program on Non Communicable Diseases," at the Department of Medical Science, Ministry of Public Health, Bangkok, Thailand, 18 March 1994 and 3 June 1994.

3.4 participated as a program member; "A workshop on Health Social Science Degree Training," held by the Department of Social Sciences, Mahidol University, at Pataya-City, Thailand, 24-26 March 1994.

3.5 attended a Seminar on : "Research and Development for Thai Behavior System," at Thailand National Research Council, Bangkok, Thailand, 4 April 1994.

3.6 participated as a program member : "A workshop on Clinical Epidemiology Ph.D. Training", at Ramathibodi Medical School, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand, 22 April 1994.

3.7 attended a Seminar of Mahidol University, the Royal River Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, 6 June 1994.

3.8 lectured the Applications of Social Science to Health to an undergraduate class of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Chiangmai University, Chiangmai, Thailand, 1-2 July 1994.

3.9 attended a Conference on Thailand Environment, the Ambassador Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, 29 July 1994.

3.10 attended a Seminar on AIDS Behavioral Research, Institute of Population and Social Research, Bangkok, Thailand, 2 August 1994.

3.11 participated on behalf of Mahidol University as a representative in Social Sciences, the Tier 1 Workshop of Civil Society and Participatory Development, Division of International Development, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada, 13-18 August 1994.

3.12 lectured on Problems in Arranging Multidisciplinary Subjects, for Graduate Studies, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand, 12 September 1994.

3.13 attended a seminar : "On Behavioural Aspects and Health," at the Department of Medical Science, Ministry of Public Health, Bangkok, Thailand, 26 September 1994.

3.14 attended a Meeting on Population Plans of Action for Thailand, Institute of Population and Social Research, Bangkok, Thailand, 28 October 1994.

3.15 lectured on the 30 years of Anthropology and Sociology Development in Thailand, at Chiangmai University, Thailand, 11 November 1994.

3.16 lectured on Socio Economic and Cultural Factors Influencing Health to an international graduate class of health science students, ASEAN Institute for Health Development, Mahidol University, KhonKaen, and NongKai provinces, Thailand, 12-14 December 1994.

3.17 lectured on Social Influences and Reproductive Behavior to a group of nurses, at Ramathibodi Medical School, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand, 16 December 1994.

3.18 presented a paper at an international workshop on Gender, Health and Sustainable Development, Singapore 24-26 January 1995.

3.19 attended a Conference on Professional Ethics of Researchers, at Thailand National Research Council, Bangkok, 9 March 1995.

3.20 participated as a program member : Health Social Science Subject for Medical Professions, at Ramathibodi Medical School, Mahidol University, Bangkok, 22 March 1995.

3.21 presented a paper at a World Mental Health : Problems and Priorities in Low-Income Countries, at Rajiv Ghandi Institute for Contemporary Studies, Delhi, India, 6-8 April 1995.

3.22 attended a National Conference on Crisis in Thai Society, at Office of the National Culture Commission, Ministry of Education, Bangkok, Thailand, 20-22 April 1995.

3.23 presented a paper at a National Conference on Health Education; School of Public Health, Mahidol University, Udonthani province, Thailand, 25-26 April 1995.

3.24 attended a meeting on Health Status and Trends, Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand, 3 May 1995.

3.25 attended a Conference on Human Rights and Health, Thammasart University, Bangkok, Thailand, 8-9 May 1995.

3.26 attended a meeting on "Social Sciences Research," at Thailand National Research Council, Bangkok, Thailand, 30 May 1995.

To help make the application of social sciences to health understood more widely, the IFSSH Secretariat has continued to work with many groups on social science and health as well as related fields. In Thailand IFSSH Secretary has ensured the application of social sciences translated into practice through several mechanisms. As a member of degree training programs, i.e., Health Social Sciences, Clinical Epidemiology, and Primary Health Care Management, a subject of social science perspectives has been introduced and integrated as a part of the curriculum. In seminars, meetings and conferences, IFSSH Secretary introduced a knowledge of social sciences to various groups of audience. As a board member of national research council, IFSSH Secretary approved to the introductions or applications of inter/multi-disciplinary activities to be the powerful mechanism in understanding health issues. The aim of the activities involved of IFSSH Secretary is therefore to increase the involvements of social science into health fields. At an international level, IFSSH secretary attended a selection of meetings/conferences in which there was a potential avenue to develop network among health forums. The participation of IFSSH Secretary to these selected international discussions created some joint ventures in relation to matters discussed above.

4. Preparation of Funding Proposals :

While the financial sustainability of IFSSH is expected to take in a certain time frame, the support for implementation of activities during the beginning stages of IFSSH establishment came from four major contributions, namely, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Rockefeller Foundation. In 1993 and 1994, the Carnegie Corporation earmarked US\$ 53,000 and 58,000 for the annual global SC Meetings held in Boston and Manila, respectively. The Ford Foundation supported US\$ 58,000 towards the Secretariat's implementation in 1993 and 1994. The IDRC funded CAD\$ 100,000 for networking activities and Secretariat operations in 1993 to 1995, and another US\$ 21,000 for the implementation of IFSSH activities and MT meetings came from the Rockefeller Foundation. It is clear that major sources of core support for the IFSSH activities and implementation came from the contributions of the funding institutes mentioned above.

During the period of financial constraint, IFSSH Secretariat with a close assistance from MT and SC members, wrote several funding proposals in past years, and in 1994 it was no exception, and IFSSH worked out a yearly basis funding proposal for the donors concerned. Hence, preparation and submission of funding proposals as well as channeling through some bureaucratic difficulties were major tasks of the Secretariat throughout 1994.

Self-sustainability was one of the main issue prepared for future financial source of IFSSH. To address the issue of self sustainability, IFSSH, together with SC, MT and regional coordinators in five regional networks, have been discussing several options on locating a possibility of self sustainability resources in order to guarantee long-term survival. With a certain time frame, a membership fee will be integrated as a part of IFSSH annual funds. A production of scientific publication is also another mechanism of fund raising. Both short and training workshops will serve as another fund supports. It is hoped that the self-sustainability of IFSSH will be made possible through a set of IFSSH financial approaches planned.

Since the above mentioned strategies will be the means of fund raising, IFSSH should seek and identify some tangible rewards and privileges to stimulate enthusiasm for memberships. An example would concern the offer of special rate of subscription to international scientific journals such as Social Science and Medicine, Health Science and Health Transition to members of IFSSH.

5. Administration of Global Secretariat :

Since last year, the installation of office infrastructure has aided toward easy accessibility and broadened the magnitude of communications with SC, MT members, regional task force groups and funding organizations. However, the Secretariat still consists of a small numbers of personnel resource which includes a full time typist, a part time language editor and a part time Secretary assistant. With its constraint resource, the Secretary has managed its administration through a voluntary basis, caring all correspondence, preparing annual global SC and MT meetings, writing funding proposals, arranging a proceedings of various meetings and publicizing IFSSH initiatives.

In order to ensure the initiatives and agendas of IFSSH to be widely known by people in the networks of social science and health, the Secretariat is publicizing its activities through two major documents, i.e., **Introduction Booklet** and **Working Document**. These documents have been distributed during various occasions of the meeting/seminar/conference that IFSSH attended and involved. About several hundred copies of the documents were destined by mail in 1994.

To foster global networking initiatives and Secretariat management, IFSSH Secretary has worked out several funding proposals, which were for one year and also on the basis of three-year plans. The preparation of the funding proposals generally involved a visit meeting and discussions with funding institution representatives and international experts. A list below are the visits, meeting and discussions mentioned.

5.1 Visit of Dr. Kaining Zhang, Yunnan Reproductive Health Research Association, Kunming, China on 21 January 1994.

5.2 Visit of Dr. Marjorie Muecke, Program Officer, the Ford Foundation from New York, on 27 January 1994.

5.3 A visit to Dr. Patricia Rosenfield, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Drs. Jose Barzelatto and Marjorie Muecke, the Ford Foundation, New York and Drs. Robert Lawrence and Scott Halstead of the Rockefeller Foundation, New York, during 28-29 April 1994.

5.4 A meeting with Dr. S.P. Tripathy, WHO, Research and Family Health in Bangkok, Thailand, on 25 August 1994.

5.5 A meeting with Dr. Radhika Balakrishnan, Program Officer, the Ford Foundation from New York, on 19 September 1994.

5.6 A meeting with Dr. Pilar Ramos-Jeminez, Dr. Fatima Castillo and Dr. Nick Higginbotham, concerning APNET proposal and plans, Manila, Philippines, 16-19 November 1994.

5.7 Visit of Dr. Violeta Lopez-Gonzaga, SEAMEO-Jasper Awardee for 1994, on 2 February 1995.

5.8 A visit to Dr. Tae-Ho Yoo, Regional Advisor, UNESCO Regional Office, on 20 February 1995.

5.9 Visit of Dr. Radhika Balakrishnan, Program Officer, the Ford Foundation from New York, on 20 February 1995.

5.10 A meeting with Program Officers of the Ford Foundation, Asian Regional Office and Health Social Science Programs, Mahidol University, Salaya, 21 February 1995.

5.11 A meeting with Dr. Scott Halstead, Health Science Division, the Rockefeller Foundation, at Mahidol University, Salaya, Thailand, 16 March 1995

5.12 A visit of Dr. Davidson Gwatkin and Ms. Tania Zaman, the International Health Policy Program, on 31 May 1995.

Other administrative activities include a translation of IFSSH initiatives Chinese language, a development to foster mechanism for persons in developing countries of the region to publish articles in an international journal and arrangements of SC election and termships. With a close collaboration of the Asia-Pacific Network of IFSSH (APENT), IFSSH Secretariat made a small fund of US\$ 1,000 to support a member of APNET in China, Dr. Kaining Zhang, to translate and reproduce IFSSH Working document in a Chinese version. Through a discussion of IFSSH Secretary a Senior editor of Medical Anthropology of Social Science and Medicine, Dr. Kris Heggenhougen, has

offered editing assistance to IFSSH global members in developing country regions who need help in the preparation of the articles. During the 2nd global SC meeting, IFSSH Secretary prepared and outlined a procedure of the completion and election of SC membership approach (see the Proceedings).

A financial statement which follows has mainly incurred to the operating global networking activities of IFSSH, i.e., coordination of the global network and establishment of the regional networks in social sciences and health. In closing this annual report the Secretary wishes to thank the International Development Research Centre for their valuable support during the period of 1994-1995.