

## **Evaluation of ‘The Struggle for Health’, IPHU Short Course Savar, Bangladesh, November 2007**

### **Participants**

36 participants enrolled. 14/36 were women. The average age was 37. They came from:

Bangladesh	15
India	4
India / UK	1
India/NZ	2
Iran	2
Germany / Iran	1
Brazil	2
Ghana	2
Philippines	1
Vietnam	1
Indonesia	1
Benin	1
Sri Lanka	1
Belgium	1
Uganda	1
Zimbabwe	1

### **Responses**

25 responses were analysed out of 36 enrolments. Three more responses were submitted some weeks after the analysis upon which this report is based. Evaluation forms were distributed in class and participants were invited to complete and submit immediately or to cogitate further and return them the following day. Might have been a mistake.

**Next time ask respondents to complete the evaluation forms in class.**

### **General**

All but one respondents affirmed the appropriateness and relevance of the course objectives. Actually the objectives adopted for this course and reflected in the evaluation questionnaire are not quite the same as those articulated on the website for the IPHU courses generally.

**Need further clarification on the website of the ‘standard’ learning objectives assumed for IPHU short courses generally and those adopted for each course. And**

**also need to ensure that the objectives on the evaluation form are the same as those published on the website.**

Respondents reported that the course was intellectually stimulating (with a score of 4.45 +/-0.72)<sup>1</sup>.

Most participants (23/24 respondents) would recommend this course to other activists in the PHM. Most agreed strongly with this proposition (18/24). One responded as Neutral to this question.

To the proposition that 'Overall, I really enjoyed the course', 22/24 agreed (14 strongly); two were neutral; one did not respond.

Participants were asked 'What did you like most about the course?'. Respondents appreciated: being at GK; the faculty; mixing with activists from many countries; being with a great bunch of folk; the curriculum; the combination of activities; the opportunity to contribute myself; learning for activism.

'What did you like least?': the challenge of listening across different accents; lax time-keeping; the long narrow room; lack of handouts; lack of computing facilities.

What changes would you make to improve it?

- more on health systems
- three weeks
- more audio visuals
- earlier assessment of participant levels and appropriate tailoring of content
- course materials provided in hard copy ahead of the time of presentation
- more case studies and examples
- tighter time keeping
- clearer mandate to class committee
- clearer guidance to country and project groups
- possibility of debates to push participants to develop their / our own analyses
- more thoughtful planning of excursions
- recap opportunities
- sharing of inner stories by senior people

Any other comments?

- Generally very positive

---

1. Individual responses offered and the numerical value applied in summarising the outcomes: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neither agree or disagree (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1). Thus the maximum score for summarising would be 5.

- Appreciation of both PHM and GK.
- Need for hard copy
- Tighter time keeping
- Attention to the problem of accents
- Enrolment and acceptance; do it earlier
- Reduce the pressure of time; longer lunches and shorter total day hours
- Allow people to make their own travel arrangements

## **Achievement of course objectives in topic areas**

### ***People's Charter for Health***

There was generally strong agreement (and consensus) regarding: a deepened understanding of the PCH. In fact the PCH for health was not as central a focus of the course as it might have been. It was distributed and referred to frequently but not studied in class or groups. Respondents' interpretation of this question might be more about appreciating the development and existence of the PCH rather than being familiar with all of the propositions and principles contained in it.

**We need to build closer study of the PCH into the program.**

### ***Political economy of health***

There was generally strong agreement (and consensus) regarding broadened understanding of global health; but a relatively wide range of opinions regarding the political economy of health. There were several comments in the free text fields regarding the density of content, language and accent barriers and pre-existing knowledge and jargon assumed in the PEH topics.

This topic was represented by three presentations:

- Globalisation and health (David)
- WTO (David)
- GATS (Miguel)

There was appreciation of content and importance of the globalisation and health presentation but some concern about accent, speed and density. The broad mixture of participants with respect to English language competence, regional accents and prior technical and political understanding was a limitation. Need for hard copy.

Respondents were generally positive regarding the WTO presentation. Perhaps a bit heavy for some.

Respondents were generally very positive regarding the GATS presentation by Miguel.

**Three issues emerge here: first, the wide range of pre-existing understanding of some key areas (such as PEH); second, the real limitations of time in terms of the learning that can be achieved; third the need to manage more effectively the languages and accents barriers.**

### ***Health systems policy***

There was general agreement but a relatively wide range of opinions regarding a sharpened understanding of PHC as a model, including debates and challenges. The related proposition regarding policy analysis (identify and critique different policy approaches to health development) attracted a general position of less positive agreement. The free text comments suggest that dense content; dull PPTs, language and accent barriers and variable pre-existing knowledge might contribute to explaining these results.

There were two presentations on health systems, 'Health systems policy: from PHC to HSR' by David and GATS by Miguel.

There was appreciation of content and importance of the health systems policy lecture but a range of responses which may correlate with English language and previous familiarity with the material; those who were more familiar may have been more appreciative. Perhaps we need a more focused discussion of different health care systems. One respondent asks for coverage of Cuba.

**These findings again point towards the need to manage more effectively the language/accent barrier and to manage more effectively the wide range of pre-existing knowledge challenge so as to ensure that participants learn as much as the can from whatever their starting base. We need to continue to explore more interactive and learner centred ways of exploring these topics. Where we stay with lectures we need to push for high quality PPTs.**

### ***Activist practice.***

There was generally strong agreement (and consensus) with respect to gaining a clearer view of the role of activists in the struggle for health but only muted agreement (and lower consensus) with respect to acquiring new frameworks, tools and skills for working with communities. Our teaching strategy for this area is mainly the learning from practice sessions; the participant presentations of stories from their practice plus class discussion of the lessons learned. It seems that this has affirmed the role of activists in the struggle for health but perhaps we could have done better in drawing out and articulating explicitly the lessons for activist practice from these stories. (The 'working with communities' objective needs to be broadened to encompass activist practice generally, including 'working with communities').

**The stories from practice activity works well but we need to do better in drawing out and articulating explicitly the lessons for activist practice from these stories.**

### **Research for Struggle (David)**

This was a brief presentation on reflecting systematically on our strategies and practice in activist work and a brief introduction to action research as a research tool for organising our own learning from practice.

There was strong support for the importance of the topic and appreciation of the ideas. However, respondents called for more time and more examples and for the opportunity to work through the issues in relation to my own context. Several asked for research to be presented in a more indepth and systematic fashion.

**Reflecting on our activist practice and the theories of change which guide it is clearly very important. Introduction to research and in particular participatory action research are also important. Clearly these areas are linked. However we need to approach both sets of issues a bit more systematically and with a more time.**

### ***Rights based approach***

There was general but muted agreement that participants had gained a deeper appreciation of the value and principles of a rights-based approach. It was not a good question because it merged appreciation of the value of a rights approach with appreciation of the principles of a rights based approach.

**However, there may be some scope for clarifying the specific objectives of this topic as well as improving the question in the evaluation questionnaire.**

### **Right to health presentation (Laura)**

Generally positive. Some respondents asking for more.

### **Project Group on the RTH**

Got a bit lost. There was some confusion as to whether the purpose of the project group which was tasked to work on the RTH was expected to range widely across the RTH as a strategy or to focus in more detail around the RTH Campaign.

**Clearer briefings on the project groups - see below.**

### ***Gender analysis / working across difference / activist practice and political analysis and strategy***

There was muted and mixed support for the proposition that participants gained more confidence in applying a gender analysis to health problems. In fact our focus in this

course was more on the personal challenges of 'working across difference' (including gender difference) rather than elaborating and employing a gender analysis to health problems.

The session on 'working across difference' attracted good feedback from the free text fields. People appreciated the opportunity to talk together in small groups about their own experiences of 'being different' and 'working across difference'. However, the focus in the discussion was largely on relationships and practices within activist organisations rather than the wider challenges of gender, class, caste, etc analysis and strategy. There may be a need for a more systematic presentation of the politics of identity and difference and specific analyses of class, gender, caste and race. This latter set of challenges could also be addressed through small group discussion but the activity brief would need to direct attention to this area.

**We need to clarify our objectives in relation to this topic to accommodate a wider focus on difference (including gender); to include both activist practice and political strategy; and to develop our resource materials so as to support the inclusion of 'relationships across difference' (including class and caste as well as gender relations) in political analysis and strategy for health development.**

### **Working across difference presentation (Laura)**

Generally good feedback. The small group discussion strategy was appreciated.

**We can go further.**

### ***Environment***

This was not listed as an objective in the evaluation proforma so we do not know whether we achieved it! In the event the only activity in this area was the lecture on Global Warming by Miguel. The response to this lecture was generally very positive. Respondents particularly appreciated the graphics although for some, the elongated room made the graphics difficult to read.

**Need to clarify our learning objectives in this area and be a bit more systematic in our approach.**

### ***Social determinants***

This was a theme which wound its way through much of the discussion during the two weeks (although it was not listed as a course objective in the evaluation proforma).

The main formal activity was Hani's lecture presentation on social determinants and PHM's engagement but the presentation was somewhat hampered by the lack of power at that time. Respondents were generally very positive about this session.

We need to clarify our learning objectives here and we need a more systematic approach to content and learning strategies.

### ***Spirit and meaning***

This was addressed through a brief presentation (by David) along the lines of 'how do we maintain our commitment and avoid institutionalisation' followed by small group discussions.

Respondents were generally positive. A small minority were not happy, in some cases because of scepticism regarding the place of this topic and in some cases because the small group was not followed by a plenary discussion of the issues arising.

**Need to clarify our objectives for this topic and think about a more systematic approach. We need to go further.**

### **Course design**

#### ***Sharing diverse experiences***

The opportunity of sharing with activists from different backgrounds was appreciated by all but one respondent. It is a strong feature of course design generally and was a positive feature of this course.

**The mix of backgrounds and sharing of experiences is valued and should be maintained.**

#### ***Participant contribution to class learning***

There was general appreciation that 'my own pre-existing experience, knowledge and skills were usefully drawn upon in the way the course worked'. However, to the related proposition that 'there should have been more opportunities for sharing of experiences among the members of the class' the average response was slightly more positive than neutral but this average obscured a wide range of differing opinions (7 disagree, 4 neutral, 14 agree).

The free text responses point towards a number of factors which may have contributed to these results. Several respondents were very critical of 'sloppy time-keeping', lax facilitation of plenary discussion and lack of clarity of purpose and discipline in small groups. There may be some contradiction between leaving space for participant contribution and the more business like learning that some participants would have preferred.

**We need to: first, explore further opportunities for student centred learning, including the sharing of experience and peer to peer teaching/learning; second,**

**cultivate tighter facilitation and consider further how to build a stronger culture in the group of time consciousness and personal discipline; and third, improve the briefings for the country and project groups and monitor and steer these groups more closely.**

### ***Mix of activities***

There was general agreement that 'the mix of lectures, plenary discussion, group work and informal learning opportunities was just about right'. The group was generally neutral, with wide range of opinions, to the propositions: 'too many lectures', 'more plenary panel discussions' and 'too much theory'.

### ***Group work***

The group was generally neutral, with wide range of opinions, to the proposition that 'the pressure on the groups to produce outputs limited the time to discuss the lecture material'. The question was not well framed.

Several respondents were critical of inadequate guidance regarding small group work.

**Better guidance for small group work including closer monitoring and intervention as necessary.**

### ***Program structure***

There was a general call for more days and fewer hours per day and a shift of heavy teaching to the morning and excursions etc to the afternoon.

To the proposition that the pressure of time interfered with learning, 6 disagreed, 4 were neutral and 12 agreed (3 strongly).

### ***Lectures***

Generally very positive although in some respects a mixed response; variously appreciation and protest at the content and theoretical level. Strong call for hard copy hand outs before time. Further protest about lax timekeeping, dense materials and difficult accents.

A few respondents called for better audio visuals.

### ***Plenary discussions***

Sometimes good; sometimes boring (for some). Protest about lax timekeeping. Comment on uneven participation. Limitations associated with the layout of the room.

### ***Project group discussions***

Mixed response. Some worked well. Some not so well. Need better guidance as to purpose and process. Need on-going monitoring and support and correction.

### ***Country group discussions***

Generally very positive. May need more guidance early on.

### ***Reports from practice***

Mainly positive, sometimes very positive. Not all equally relevant to PHM.

Concern about equity raised by two respondents. Some people who had prepared were not invited to present.

### ***Panel discussions***

Generally very positive. Protest about several of the scheduled panel discussions being cancelled [mainly because they were scheduled towards the end of the day].

Can we focus the panel topics on the lecture content?

Concern about the process of generating questions and selecting and preparing the panelists. Perhaps a wall notice board for recording panel topics; perhaps include whom you would like to hear.

### ***Excursions***

Appreciation of the break in the pressure of classes but protests about the time spent in the bus. Suggest shorter distances. One request for ecological sites.

Protests about the use of time in the GK walk-around and long talks which were not of interest to everyone.

Suggest schedule excursions in the afternoon with no following on classes.

### ***Other***

Better organisation of visits to GK and villages.

More attention to group leadership.

Daily reports: need better cooperation and understanding.

Need for daily recaps and daily evaluations

## **Pedagogy generally**

Weak aspects

- lack of hard copy resources
- packed program;
- lax facilitation;

Suggestions

- wider range of class activities including more participatory activities such as games, role plays etc
- more concrete examples,
- more opportunities to test our own thinking.

## **Faculty**

While we did not ask specifically about faculty there were several comments which conveyed appreciation of the expertise, commitment, approachability, etc of faculty members.

## **Logistics**

Several respondents were critical of the continuing changing class schedule. While this was unavoidable in the context of this course tighter and more detailed planning in other settings might allow more for more certainty regarding the program.

Language barriers and accent barriers have been already mentioned. There may be ways in which we could have managed these better.

Announcement, application and enrolment: Clearly people had different experiences. For many, the late notification was a real challenge ('It was very bad in my whole life experience.') but not for everyone. It does underline the importance of these issues.

Ticketing, visa and reception were problematic for several respondents. Visa on arrival was a problem. Booking and ticketing through third parties was a problem. Reception at the airport was a problem for several, including those who slept overnight in customs.

We need to collect data about food preferences as part of enrolment. Some complain about spicy foods; some about the lack of variety with respect to food; and a few about the lack of a full menu for the vegetarians.

We also need to collect data about disabilities although it was not a major problem in this course.

More computers needed. Big problems with power and internet access. Some distress at lack of email access.

Need decent photocopier on hand.

### **Marketing, recruitment and selection**

There were several comments about the wide range of pre-existing knowledge levels and the challenges that this posed in both plenary and small group discussions.

This is likely to be an ongoing problem. We need more effective strategies. Peer to peer teaching? Peer mentoring? Streaming?

### **Venue**

Several respondents emphasised how much they appreciated the opportunity of studying at GK.