



The CARMEN School



Introduction:

In 2000, the 53rd World Health Assembly (WHA) approved Resolution WHA53.17 which requested the WHO Director-General to develop a global strategy for the prevention and control of NCDs. Since then, several resolutions and strategic papers have been developed to be implemented globally including: the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (2003), Global Strategy for

Diet, Physical Activity and Health (2004), Resolution on Cancer Prevention (2005), World Health Report 2002, and the reports “Preventing Chronic Diseases, a vital investment” (2005), Final Report of WHO Commission on Social Determinates and Health (2008) and “Prevention and Control of non communicable diseases: Implementation of the Global strategy” (2008). These resolutions and strategic reports laid the groundwork for a global strategy in the prevention and control of NCDs through the year 2013.

In 2006, the “Regional Strategy and Plan of Action on an Integrated Approach to the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases for the Americas” was endorsed by all countries of the Americas. The main vehicle for its implementation is the network, of countries and partners in the region, called CARMEN.

The CARMEN network started as project in 1996, when the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), developed the idea with the intention of conferring technical cooperation and support to Member States that are implementing community-based NCD prevention programs. The CARMEN Project and subsequent CARMEN initiatives aimed to prevent major chronic non-communicable diseases by reducing the prevalence of key risk factors among the population through the implementation of an integrated approach.

Since 2007, CARMEN has become a network comprised of 30 Member States, other international networks, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations. These groups utilize CARMEN as a platform for the exchange of ideas and the coordination of improved responses to NCD epidemic in the Region. The network is linked to the other WHO Regional Networks as well as to the Global Forum. In this way, CARMEN is an inter-connected forum that allows countries to share pertinent information with each other in order to improve the implementation of integrated chronic disease prevention and health promotion programs in their own countries. The CARMEN Network strives to promote collaboration as a means of tackling the increasing burden of disease due to chronic non-communicable diseases

CARMEN School:

CARMEN School, a special project of the CARMEN network, is a generic name for a series of trainings and public health activities that build partnerships between schools of public health (SPH), public health agencies, and Ministries of Health (MOH) at the country level.

Spanish:

*Conjunto de
Acciones para la
Reducción
Multifactorial de
Enfermedades
No transmisibles*

English:

*Comprehensive
Action for
Risk factor reduction
Management and
Evaluation of
NCDs*

Human resources are a crucial component of any public health system, and the health workforce can benefit from continuing education opportunities to improve skills and knowledge to develop, implement and evaluate NCD prevention initiatives. The Schools of Public Health are considered critical partners in human resource development. Engaging them in capacity-building processes on health promotion and NCD prevention, as partners of the CARMEN Network, allows them to fully participate in NCD prevention and control initiatives in the Region. It is possible, by establishing this partnership, to build bridges between the academic sector, health services and community.

Long term objectives:

- a) To support development of necessary competencies to enable public health workers and communities to confront the challenges of NCD prevention and health promotion initiatives.
- b) To strengthen the collaboration between SPH, public health agencies and MOH in supporting of NCD prevention and control.

Short term objectives:

- a) Development, implementation, and evaluation of training courses on integrated NCD prevention for primary health care professionals, community workers, and community leaders.
- b) Establishment of technical exchange program with Preventive Research Centers (PRC) in the United States to support continuous improvement of the CARMEN School.
- c) Creation of full CARMEN school program, with several modules, including spectrum of topics and could be attended as a full CARMEN school – part of continuous education or attended separately.

As of now five courses have been offered and evaluated throughout the LAC region. Three of the courses were developed in collaboration with the network of Preventive Research Centers (PRC), a group of 30 universities in the United States. The Evidence-Based Public Health course (EBPH) was formulated by PRC of St. Louis University, the Physical Activity and Public Health course (PAPH) put forth by PRC of South Carolina University, and the Social Marketing course (SM) was developed by PRC of South Florida University. The fourth course, Policy Analyses and Decision Making (PADM), was developed with the World Bank. The fifth on Evidence Based Chronic Illness Care was developed with University of Miami.

PAHO Partnerships in the CARMEN School project:

- ⇒ The University of Saint Louis, School of Public Health (PRC) in USA
- ⇒ University of South Carolina, School of Public Health (PRC) US
- ⇒ University of South Florida, School of Public Health (PRC)US
- ⇒ University of Cali, School of Public Health (Colombia)
- ⇒ University of Concepcion, Department of Public Health (Chile)
- ⇒ University of Pelotas, (Brazil)
- ⇒ The West Indies University, Department of Public Health (Jamaica)
- ⇒ The University of San Carlos & University of Galileo (Guatemala)
- ⇒ University of South Florida branch in Panama City (Panama)
- ⇒ University of Miami, Miler School of Medicine, (USA)

EBPH course has been offered as:

- Short Course (40 hours) in 2004 in Chile,
- Fellowship course (2005, 2006, 2007) in Concepcion, Chile, and
- Masters program (2006, 2007) Catholic University Concepcion, Chile
- Short course (40 hours) (2005) in Uruguay (University of Montevideo)
- Degree program (2006, 2007) in Brazil (U de Pelotas)
- Short course (40 hours) and module in Masters program (2007, 2008) in Jamaica (West Indies University)
- Short course (40 hours) in 2007 in Guatemala (U of San Carlos)
- Short course (40 hours) in Cali, Colombia (2008) (University of Cali)
- Hybrid course (40 hours online and 20 hours on-site) in Cali, Colombia (August 2009)
- Hybrid course (40 hours online and 20 hours on-site) in the Caribbean with University of St Louis and University of West Indies (*planned for 2011*)

PAPH course has been offered as:

- Short Course in Costa Rica (2005)
- Short Course in Chile (2006) (U of Paya Ancha, Valparaiso)
- Short Course in Guatemala (2007) (U of Galileo, Guatemala City)

SM course has been offered as:

- Short Course in Panama (2006) (USF campus in Panama City)
- Short Course in Mexico (2008) (Institute of Public Health, Mexico)
- Short Course in Chile (2008) (INTA, Santiago de Chile)
- Guatemala, Dec 2010. (University of Galileo, Guatemala City)

PADM course has been offered as:

- Short Course in Barbados for ECC countries (October 2007)
- 1-day seminar (10 hours) (Nov 2008) (Evangelic University of El Salvador)

EBCIC course has been offered as:

- Short Course in Miami for LAC countries (July 2010 and July 2011)

As of now CARMEN school included 27 courses in 14 countries, 2 sub regions and 2 regional level with over 800 professionals participating.

The evaluation of the EBPH and PAPH short courses was conducted by independent consultants in 2007. The results from the evaluations indicated that the training courses were well-received by public health professionals and were viewed as an effective tool for education of the issues around the prevention of NCDs. The recommendations from evaluation were used to improve the organization and content of the courses.

One important aspect to success of the CARMEN school model is the commitment and collaboration between Ministry of Health, other governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the overall educational regulatory institutions. Cooperation at multiple levels ensured greater institutionalization and on-going commitment to the continuation of the trainings. The efforts to align the trainings with national health promotion policies also constituted important factor in the school's success.

In 2010 Network has performed a study on needs for capacity building among 156 professionals working as country NCD coordinators or collaborators from universities, Government sectors; consultants (response rate: 72%)

Their perceived gap is in following competences ranked by priority:

- Epidemiology of NCDs, bio statistics, Monitoring & Evaluation,
- Negotiations skills,
- Multi-sector collaboration;
- Program management;
- Social marketing;
- Communication,
- Use of informatics' technology

To improve those competences and diversify education modalities (as access to resources in the counties like basic software, access to internet, PC was reported 95% and to specialized software and videoconference over 60% .

The new syllabus for Long distance course was developed and promoted together with previous modalities, using platform of Virtual Campus of Pan American Health Organization. Besides Long distance course, the existing Hybrid courses, “Face to face” will be kept and promoted Self development and Training at work as part of new offer.