



RESEARCH FOR PEOPLE'S HEALTH



A Researcher's Encounter at the
Second People's Health Assembly of
the People's Health Movement
14th and 15th July, 2005
Cuenca, Ecuador

This is the report of :

"Research for People's Health"

A Researcher's Encounter at the Second People's Health Assembly

Organized by :

The Second People's Health Assembly of the People's Health Movement
University of Cuenca, Faculty of Medical Sciences
International People's Health University
National Association of Faculties of Medicine (AFEME), Ecuador
Global Forum for Health Research, Geneva

This report is also available at the website

www.phmovement.org/pha2

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People's Health Movement (Global Secretariat)
C/o. CHC, 359, Srinivasa Nilaya,
Jakkasandra 1st Main,
1st Block, Koramangala,
Bangalore, India
Ph. : +91-80-51280009
E-mail : secretariat@phmovement.org

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SYNTHESIS

BACKGROUND

The Second Health Assembly of the People's Health Movement and the International People's Health University was held at the Faculty of Medical Sciences of the University of Cuenca from 17 to 22 July 2005. A research encounter bringing together researchers from all over the world committed to people's health problems was organized as a pre-Assembly event on 14 and 15 July 2005. The purpose was to reflect on and debate the problems related to research on People's Health conducted globally.

The Conference takes place in a situation in which

- ┆ globalization, with its lack of regulation, has produced more inequities than solutions;
- ┆ health has become increasingly commodified;
- ┆ the majority of the population do not have access to health or health care or access has been limited substantially.

This situation has been exacerbated by the presence of problems stemming from technological and scientific dependence; inadequate research relevant to People's Health, and the increasing obstacles to the enhancement of opportunities and conditions to lead a meaningful life. Research, has not been focused on

fundamentals i.e. to improve the health of the citizens of the world. It has been oriented to reap economic profits that benefit a small minority and this was referred to as the "10/90 Gap".

The Conference included a forum for the presentation of experiences and proposals, as well as for reflection, debate and search for alternative research methodologies. This is important because the world's dominant paradigms have not resolved its major health problems but have contributed to the situation whereby a few are benefiting at the cost of the majority.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFERENCE

Researchers from the five continents representing more than 20 regional and global organizations, made presentations.

They were invited to discuss and reflect on actual situations and to propose new methodologies and forms of learning for the future.

On the final day, a panel discussion comprising of the Steering Committee of the Latin American and Caribbean Health Research Forum (LACHRF) was held. Their presence was supported by the Global Forum for Health Research. As part of the panel, Dr Francisco Becerra explained the process behind the establishment of the LACHRF and announced that the Committee would also circulate a position paper soon.



THEMATIC AIMS

- ┆ Research as a tool for the liberation and transformation of People's Health;
- ┆ New research paradigms for People's Health;
- ┆ To review supportive, democratic, and social participation for the development of knowledge enabling the transformation of People's Health and lives.

IDEAS EMERGING FROM THE CONFERENCE

After the presentations by the panelists and ensuing discussions of the researchers, the following central ideas emerged:

- ❖ It is important to understand that research is a tool for social transformation. Advantage should be taken of its potential for exposing and fighting for equity in health, for the empowerment of the community using political, psychological, cultural, and social means.

This is indispensable in order to destroy the myths of the role of research and the dominant biomedical paradigms that attempt to impose the belief that research is a privileged activity of the scientific and economic elite and therefore inaccessible to the People.

- ❖ There is a need to rethink the relationship between researchers and the community it is important to look at the community as the subject of investigations and not the object. New paradigms must therefore be advanced, including the genuine integration of researchers into the community. The key is for the latter to have critical and inclusive participation.

- ❖ The distinction between scientific needs and social needs must be addressed: the separation between scientific communities and local social communities indicates the incompatibility of interests. Meetings to plan studies should not only involve researchers, but also people's organizations



and social movements in order to discuss how they can work together to address the problems being researched; the focus and the methodologies; the goals and priorities; the resources; and the means of dissemination and action following the research process.

To achieve this, we need to design alternative and creative strategies to increase the commitment of researchers and to break down the "10/90 Gap" in health research. For this, it is necessary:

- To incorporate research into social mobilization and to use the findings to effect changes in Public Health policies;
- To change the dominant biomedical paradigm in the training of health professionals. This must be done at the same time so as to effect changes in research paradigms;
- To build multidisciplinary teams of researchers and social organizations to investigate common problems in the world with the aim of improving the Peoples' Health;
- To build real and virtual networks of researchers, regional networks; to encourage the development and participation in programmes and multi centre projects; and to use the internet wide for the dissemination of studies that contribute to the development of new research paradigms.

- Ø To monitor the worsening of health indicator when various health and education systems are privatized. The challenge of researchers would be to present evidence of these effects of privatization on education and health in order to prevent it from occurring in more countries.
- To understand that research is a necessary resource for more effective interventions;
- To promote the interconnection of Regional research through networks, remembering the words of José de Souza: **"the challenge for Latin America is to learn by inventing locally or to perish imitating the global"**.

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- ❖ We should take advantage of the potential of research for social transformation and improvements in health.
- ❖ It is critical that we move beyond the dominant biomedical research paradigm. This is also related to the dominant biomedical paradigm in the training of the health professionals.
'Before changing things, we must change the people that change things'. - José de Souza.
- ❖ Health research is not a private activity of economic and scientific elites. We should incorporate the community as subjects and not as objects of research. There should not only be dialogue among researchers but also between researchers and the organizations and social movements that participate in the research. This would include

discussions of the objectives, methodologies and the resources to be used. This contributes to the collective health development process.

- v It is necessary for researchers in People's Health to collaborate with and support organizations and social movements through the formation of global, regional, and local networks, forums and encounters that deal with common health problems.
- v Researchers, in collaboration with organizations and social movements, should take on the challenge of presenting social and scientific evidence to prevent the wave of privatization, especially in health and education, from continuing to extend throughout the world causing more pain and marginalization.
- v To define collectively themes of research that call for researchers and social organizations to unite their efforts to better understand and address health problems.



Cuenca, Ecuador
July 2005

Dr. Jaime Morales S.M.
Conference Coordinator

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A DECLARATION

An important "Researcher's Encounter" was held between the 14th and 15th of July 2005 in the Faculty of Medical Sciences of the University of Cuenca, Ecuador, as an associated event of the Second Health Assembly of the People's Health Movement. At this conference the researchers in People's Health made a number of observations and recommended methodologies to improve the health and life of the people of the world.

PREAMBLE

These recommendations are oriented towards training institutions, governments, investigators, NGOs and civil society representatives



Participants in the research forum in Cuenca should carry these messages to forums in different countries.

Reference must be made to the accounts of the progressive thinkers of the world and consideration given to their health research proposals

relevant to the current social, economic, political and cultural contexts.

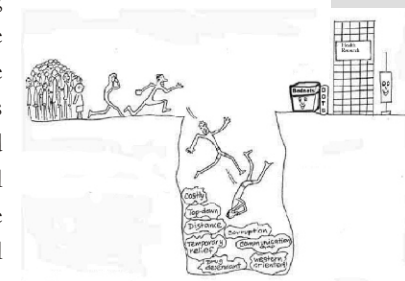
The Forum of Researchers suggested the following:

TO COUNTRIES

- ✓ Discussions in Health Research should include health sector officials who should be involved in the change processes.
- ✓ Research should aid in the revision and update of agreed health standards to ensure that they remain within legal frameworks and contexts.
- ✓ Research should help to influence state policies and thereby help prioritize allocations of economic resources for health, education and nutrition in addition to controlling and preventing diseases.
- ✓ National and local expenditure relating to the use of sectoral funds for health research should be monitored in terms of priorities as well as to assure the conducting of health systems research.

TO RESEARCHERS

- ✓ It is important to value research principally from the point of view of health and life.
- ✓ Research should bring about social action by the mobilization of people and communities as participants and collaborators. Biomedical research should be integrated with social research.
- ✓ There should also be a sincere effort to integrate quantitative and qualitative health research.



- V Research findings should be shared with members of the community with whose assistance research findings and conclusions came about.
- V Research should involve dialogue between investigators and representatives of communities as well as the people directly.
- V There should be the creation of virtual information spaces for the learning of new research paradigms without denying or restricting access to any information that conforms to ethical norms.
- V An international committee should be convened including biomedical as well as social and cultural components and primary health care.
- V Research should be multidisciplinary and bring about dialogue between professionals in the health sector with professionals of other sectors such as social science, economics, etc.
- V It is important to network with national, regional and international forums of health research.
- V The research process should aim to improve collaboration among investigators and with local mass media, local governments and other political sectors.

TO TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

- V There should be serious revision in education of human resources in health, within the framework of the new paradigm of research.
- V New resources should be identified in universities that would help engagement in new paradigms of research.

- V The new paradigm should not be taught, but rather be learned together with the community taking part in the research.
- V It is imperative that the social research component of health research be strengthened.
- V Postgraduate education/ specialization should conform more to community-based and participatory action.
- V The universities should be charged with developing community research programs in a participatory way.
- V It is necessary to reach the community through education using schools and other means in order to enhance the community's health with a more holistic and lasting influence.
- V Through university outreach, proposals for participatory research can be developed.
- V There must be efforts to establish strategic alliances for research in health and social sciences.
- V There is a need to improve the capacity to develop research proposals.
- V There must be adequate allocation of economic resources for the application of strategies with emphasis on health promotion at all levels.

The Faculty of Medical Sciences of the University of Cuenca and all the researchers, who attended the Forum, will be pleased to work towards the achievement of these recommendations.

Researchers From "Research for People's Health: A Researcher's Encounter" at the Second People's Health Assembly of the People's Health Movement Cuenca, 15 July 2005.

**Panelists of
“Research for People's Health”:
a Researcher's Encounter at
The University of Cuenca, Ecuador,
14-15 July 2005**

Name of Panel	Institution	Theme
PANEL 1		
President: Dr. Hernán Hermida	University of Cuenca	
Secretary: Lcda. Carmen Pazán	University of Cuenca	
David Sanders	University Western Cape People's Health Movement	Making health research matter: a suggested new paradigm
Sylvie Olifson-Houriet	Global Forum for Health Research	Case for more research in poverty and health.
David Legge	International People's Health University People's Health Movement	Research for health and life
Claudio Schuftan	Public Health Consultant, Vietnam	Ten thoughts about research
PANEL 2		The transforming action of research
President: Dr. José Cabrera	University of Cuenca	
Secretary: Dra. Lorena Mosquera	University of Cuenca	
Thando Ngomane	Global Equity Gauge Alliance (GEGA)	Global Equity Gauge Alliance
Delen de la Paz	University of Philippines, Manila People's Health Movement	The Transforming Action of Investigation as Basis for Social Mobilization
Prem John	People's Health Movement	The community and research.
PANEL 3		Constructing a new thinking on research in people
President: Dr. Fernando Sempértegu	University of Cuenca	
Secretary: Dr. Sergio Guevara	University of Cuenca	
René Pérez M	International Public School	Rescue of innovating experiences in health

Name of Panel	Institution	Theme
Leticia Artilles	Superior Institute of Medical Sciences	Pertinent methodological alternatives to specific scenes of the health
Eduardo Espinoza	University of San Salvador	How to make equipment the results of research
Francoise Barten	University of Nijmegen	Rescue of innovating experiences in health
Narendra Gupta	People's Health Movement	Constructing a new thinking on research in people's health to bring about social liberation and a health life
PANEL 4 President: Dr. Marco Alvarez	National Association of Faculties of Medicine (AFEME), Ecuador	Alternatives to strengthen the social
Secretary: Lcda. María Merchán	University of Cuenca	
Donald Simeon	Latin American and Caribbean Health Research Forum	Alternatives to strengthen the participation in the creation of knowledge and understanding of People's Health
Antonio Alves da Cunha	Latin American and Caribbean Health Research Forum	National health system & health research in Brazil
Cesar Hermida	Latin American and Caribbean Health Research Forum	Health Research: Fora, Policies and Systems for Maternal Mortality in Ecuador
Francisco Becerra Posada	Latin American and Caribbean Health Research Forum	Report of the Task Force on Health Systems Research Latin-American and Caribbean Health Research Forum
PANEL 5 President: Dra. Elvira Palacios	University of Cuenca	Form of integration of the scientific and social local community
Secretary: Lcda. María Iturralde	University of Cuenca	
Delia Sanchez	Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED)	Making Health Research work...for everyone
Thelma Narayan	SOCHARA, People's Health Movement	Methods of integration of the scientific and local communities.
PANEL 6 President: Dr. José Ortiz	University of Cuenca	Methods of integrating of the investigators
Secretary: Dr. José Luis García	University of Cuenca	
Fran Baum	Flinders University People's Health Movement	Research and the Struggle for Health
Ravi Narayan	People's Health Movement	Research for People's Health: Towards an Alternative Research Paradigm
Miguel San Sebastian	International School of Public Health, Umea, Sweden	Ways of integrating researchers in the struggle for people's health.