

COMMUNITY HEALTH LEARNING PROGRAMME-2010

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) What is the Community Health Learning Programme – CHLP?

The Community Health Learning Programme is an opportunity for young professionals to learn about community health and experience its various options by involving themselves in a person-centred, semi-structured learning programme.

2) What are the objectives of the CHLP?

- To promote life options in community health by offering a semi-structured, placement opportunity in CHC, in partnership with selected community health projects.
- To strengthen personal motivation, interest and commitment for community health.
- To sharpen analytical skills and to deepen the understanding of the societal paradigm of community health.

3) What do I gain from the CHLP?

The CHLP exposes the participants to the large canvas of community health with a greater focus on the Indian experience, and introduces to them the 'social or community' paradigm of health. It also provides an opportunity for the participants to understand the various community health initiatives in the country, and to visit them. In addition, it gives the participant an option of working with a suitable community health programme for a longer period of time, as part of the programme.

The group-learning and debriefing sessions provide an opportunity for the participants to learn, discuss, reflect and share their experiences with others, while learning from other's experiences. The personal mentoring process during the Programme ensures that the participant gets ample opportunity to reflect and learn from their experiences along with getting guidance for planning their future course of action. The mentoring process also helps each participant to chart their plan of action based on their needs and long term goals.

The participants get an opportunity to meet and interact with some of the pioneers of community health, public health and health policy in the country. The participants are also encouraged to attend suitable external training programmes and workshops. They would also be contributing to the work of People's Health Movement in the country and across the globe.

4) What am I expected to do during the Learning Programme?

The Programme is semi-structured and allows enough flexibility for the participants to set their own learning objectives, based on their needs and long-term goals, in consultation with their mentors and other peers.

Orientation

The participants undergo an initial six week orientation programme at CHC. During the orientation programme they engage in understanding the concepts of community health, the health status in India and how health is determined by social, economic and political

processes. The participants evolve their learning objectives and also identify a set of core knowledge and skills, which they want to improve during their internship. As the Programme progresses, the participants are given the liberty to modify their learning objectives to take advantage of new learning opportunities.

Field Placements

After the orientation process, the participants visit one or more community health projects for a certain period, to learn by involving themselves in some action, training or research initiative, with a special focus on community contact and interaction. The participants are expected to write reflective and analytical reports about these experiences. The participants return to CHC during the middle of the field placement for group learning and debriefing sessions, where their experiences are shared, discussed, analysed and internalised.

The participants are encouraged to involve themselves in all the activities of CHC and the Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (People's Health Movement in India) during their placement and then write a reflective / perceptive / SWOT oriented report on their experience.

The person-centred and semi-structured nature of the Programme helps the participants to choose their course of action. Some participants undertake small research projects on relevant health issues based on a community health or public health perspective. They may do an annotated bibliography of CHC resources and other materials in a selected area or topic of significance or current concern in community health and public health. They are encouraged and supported in writing good quality articles or papers based on their area of interest.

At the end of the field placement, there will be debriefing session, a self assessment, a peer assessment and also opportunity to discuss learning experiences and future plans. The interns submit a reflective and analytical report of their experiences, based on their learning objectives.

Skill Based Training

During the course of their learning, interns may have identified specific skills that they would like to acquire or to sharpen further. For example, this may include health communication processes; writing skills for public health; skills to do simple research studies and such other kind of skill sets. Based on the needs of the interns, specific skill based training sessions would also be conducted.

After the debriefing session of the field placement sessions, the interns have to take up a specific community health project based on their learnt skills in their area of interest during the last 3 months of the Programme. The interns should submit a reflective and analytical report of their work in the end.

5) What is the duration of the Programme?

The full time Programme is for a period of nine months.

However, for otherwise suitable candidates who cannot commit for nine continuous months of internship, few flexible opportunities are available every year, to accommodate the need, aptitude and interest of the participant.

6) Is it a full time/part time Programme?

Participants have to engage full time with their learning programme if they are doing the nine month course or the flexible programme. This is an advanced learning opportunity in community health. Participants cannot do their job and also the CHLP at the same time.

Participants get ample opportunities to learn from the orientation sessions, field placements and skill based training. It also gives an opportunity for the participant to read, learn, discuss, reflect and share their thoughts, ideas and experiences. Essentially, the Programme helps the participant to enhance their understanding of community health. They could go back to their organization or field of work with skills to apply their learning in their work.

7) How does CHC support you during the Programme?

A nominal stipend of Rs. 7000 per month will be paid to support the basic living costs of the participants. Accommodation is arranged during the sessions at CHC.

8) Do I have to be based in CHC for the duration of the Programme?

Participants visit CHC only during the orientation, debriefing, group learning and library sessions. For the rest of the period, the participants are based in the field – in the various community health projects where they would be placed. CHC will facilitate the field placement of each intern.

9) What kind of support will be provided after the Programme?

To continue the learning process, mechanisms have been developed for networking between participants, and between participants and CHC. These include alumni e-groups, circulation of newsletters, background papers, reflections, research outputs, etc. In addition, the participants can keep in touch with CHC team members, society members of CHC (SOCHARA), friends and associates who are located in different parts of the country and the world.

An annual workshop for the alumni has been planned to share their experiences, present about their work and to facilitate their mutual interactions. There is also a need for continuing learning and strengthening the knowledge, attitudes and skills developed during the Programme. An alumni support cell is being formed that would mentor alumni in their community health work.

10) When does the Programme begin?

The full time Programme starts in March, 2010. However, the flexible placement would allow suitable candidates to join the Programme at any appropriate time during the year. But letters with CV for the flexible programme can be sent to us even now.

11) What are the eligibility criteria for the applicants?

Graduates in Health Sciences (Medicine, Indian systems of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy) OR Postgraduates in Social Sciences OR Graduates in Social Sciences with 3 years working experience in community based organizations in the areas of health and development can apply. If you have an interest in community health, or if

you are contemplating a career in the service of the community, you are encouraged to apply.

12) How do I apply?

Send in your CV or Résumé, with complete contact information (including telephone and email) to CHC by post (address in the end) or email to chinternship@sochara.org along with a one page note on why you want to join this Programme.

13) How do I know if I have been selected?

All applications sent to CHC go through a screening process. We will get back to you immediately after your application has been screened. In case you do not hear from us by end of January 2010, do contact us again. Following the screening, suitable candidates are interviewed at CHC in Bangalore by a panel and are selected based on the interview.

14) What are some of the experiences of the interns during the learning programme?

Please refer to 'Building Blocks', the newsletter showcasing the experiences of the interns available at www.sochara.org.

15) What are the CHLP alumni doing currently?

Please to the Snapshot of the CHLP alumni at www.sochara.org.

16) Whom do I contact for more information?

You can write to the Programme Officer

By Land Post:

Community Health Cell (CHC),
85/2, 1st Main, Maruthi Nagara, Madiwala,
Bengaluru - 560068

By Telephone: +91-80-25531518/25525372

By Email: chinternship@sochara.org
