

Feedback from On-going Twinning Project between Chiang Mai University and University of Minnesota: Including Contribution of Twinning to Improvement of Education in the Region

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In 2013, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Chiang Mai University, Thailand (CMU) and the College of Veterinary Medicine at University of Minnesota (UMN) were invited by the World Organisation of Animal Health (OIE) to initiate the first Veterinary Education Twinning Project. The CMU-UMN veterinary education twinning project comprised three parallel activities to strength the veterinary curriculum at both faculties: 1) curriculum mapping to the *OIE Guidelines on Veterinary Education Core Curriculum* and the *OIE Recommendations on the Competencies of graduating veterinarians ('Day 1 graduates')* to assure *National Veterinary Services of quality*; 2) faculty exchanges and professional development to enhance the knowledge and didactic skills of teaching staff; and 3) bilateral exchanges of veterinary student and teaching staff to see how Day 1 competencies are taught by each other. The role of the OIE in veterinary education needed to be explained early in the project in order to gain the support of teaching staff. The curriculum mapping identified both strengths and opportunities for enhancements at each of the twinning partners. Participation in courses at each other's faculty proved to be a powerful demonstration of alternative approaches for teaching core competencies. Initial curriculum enhancements focused on specific gaps identified by the curriculum mapping and on teaching staff who were most interested in strengthening their teaching skills. Curriculum enhancement has been an incremental process involving integration of additional educational objectives, active learning approaches and on-line teaching materials. Student feedbacks has supported continuous improvement by affirming many of the enhancements and pointing out opportunities for constructive change. Co-teaching continuing education programs has created strong relationships among teaching staff and facilitated transfer of best practices. Lessons learned during the project were shared through newsletters disseminated every six months and presentations at Veterinary Educational conferences in the South East Asia Veterinary School Association (SEAVSA) Meeting, the Asian Association of Veterinary School (AAVS) Congress and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) Annual Conference. The positive impact of the project was expanded by workshops focusing on Day-1 specific competency module development and active learning techniques for key teaching staff members from VEEs across Thailand. Moreover, ideas for implementing of OIE Day-1 Competencies were introduced thru a panel discussion on "Veterinary Education Twinning" held during the International Food Safety and Zoonoses Symposium in 2015 for teaching staff in veterinary schools in ASEAN. The strong commitment of numerous faculty members and top leadership at CMU and UMN has been one of the key factors in the project's success.

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