



**Regional Health Research and Development Councils:
At the HELM of the PNHRs**

National Assessment Report

Approach to the consultations



- SONHeRD (*ala SONA*)
 - State of the Nation's Health Research and Development Councils
- You can't improve what you can't measure! 😊
- Murphy's Law:
 - If it ain't broke – why fix it?
- Consultations were collegial in nature
 - We had more to learn than to contribute
.....much less prescribe!

Our working assumptions ...



- Regional health research and development councils are at the *HELM* of the PNHRS
- Active regional participation in health research and development is crucial for the attainment of the PNHRS mission and vision
- Urgent need to:
- Refocus and channel energies and resources to high priority health issues and concerns particular to local settings
- Reposition national support for maximum effectiveness, efficiency, and impact

Objectives of the Assessment



- Describe the various models of regional health research and development councils (RHRDCs)
- Identify strengths and areas for improvement of regional research councils
- Recommend
 - measures to strengthen regional capacity for research and development
 - ways to make the national PNHRS more responsive to the needs of the regions

Methodology



- Structured and semi-structured meetings and interviews with stakeholders at the regional level: researchers, members of the regional research consortia
- Review of relevant documents: RUHRA, strategic and operational plans, budget utilization reports, accomplishment reports, reports on regional research projects

Assessment Results



- Strengths
- Areas for Improvement
- Opportunities
- Challenges
- Way Forward

STRENGTHS



Across regions:

- Strong institutional desire to collaborate and work together for R and D in health
- Multidisciplinary composition of members
- Presence of credible champions (institutions and committed individuals)
- Highly skilled and highly motivated research manpower

STRENGTHS



- **In Luzon**

- Presence of good research facilities in the more urban regions/centers such as Metro Manila

- **In Luzon and Visayas**

- Ability of institutions and researchers to tap various funding sources (local and foreign)

STRENGTHS



- **In Mindanao**

- International and local funding agencies provide support for social services, health R&D
- Varied experiences in the management of research activities allow opportunities for regions to share their expertise
 - some “veteran” regions like Region 11
 - others are “neophyte” regions like ARMM
- Strong desire to collaborate and address the priority health needs of the regions

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT ⁽¹⁾



1. Councils are at various levels of development
2. Need for organizational development support
3. Need for strategic planning
 - too short planning horizon
4. Ineffective and highly inefficient management structures

Luzon RHRDCs



Region	Core Agency	Year established
NCR	UPM-NIH	2008 (revitalized) 1984 (est.)
Region 1	NEDA-1	2002 (revitalized)
Region 2	DOH-2	2006
Region 3	DOST-3	2008
Region 4	De La Salle Health Sciences Institute	2007
Region 5	Ago Medical and Educational Center – Bicol Christian College of Medicine	2007
CAR	DOH-CAR	2007

Visayas RHRDCs



Region	Core Agency	Year Established
Region 6	DOST-6	1986
Region 7	Cebu Doctors University	1987
Region 8	DOH-Eastern Visayas	1985 (est) 1994 (rev)

Mindanao RHRDCs



Region	Lead Agency	Year Established
IX	WMSU	2007
X	DOH	2008
XI	RECORDS Foundation, Inc	1985
XII	DOST	2007
ARMM	DOST-ARMM	2007
CARAGA	DOH and DOST	2008

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (2)



5. Work of researchers has been limited by the available funds
6. Research projects funded by the consortium are too small and too isolated to make a difference
 - Example:
 - » PCHRD support of 100K limits the scope and relevance of projects

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (3)



7. National and regional research agenda have been primarily used as a reference document in the review of research projects.
 - Need to systematically review the priority areas and use as a tool for
 - capacity building
 - mobilization of resources
8. Absence of unifying theme in the work of the different sub-committees
9. Minimal collaboration among researchers, institutions and across regions that share the same priorities and problems

OPPORTUNITIES



- Strong bias within PNHRs for strengthening regional capacity for health research and development
- Availability of funds for research
- Presence of successful models of collaboration in other sectors

CHALLENGES



Making a Difference for Equity in Health

1. What needs to be done to facilitate the collaboration of institutions and regions to address priority health problems and issues?
 - Working island-wide/across regions requires:
 - new terms and means of engagement
 - paradigm shift
 - innovative responses
 - timely and adequate support from national level

CHALLENGES

Making a Difference for Equity in Health



2. Challenge to the region:

- The monopoly of Metro Manila institutions over national research funds can be surpassed by the regions
- Design and implement good research programs which address local priorities
- Collaborate
- Incorporate research translation (into policy and practice)

CHALLENGES

Making a Difference for Equity in Health

3. Advocating for the need for research among various stakeholders (LGUs, NGOs, private sector, other government agencies, etc.)
4. Providing good evidence/information to develop responsive policies



CHALLENGES

Making a Difference for Equity in Health

5. Can the existing program of assistance to the regions be restructured to allow for more equity and support to those who need it more?
6. Can the PNHRS reorganize itself to be more responsive to the needs of the regions?



The Way Forward



- Global strategies in addressing national and local health issues
- Pressure from “below”, coupled with a creative response from “above”



- "I have always believed that when the best science and scientists are devoted to the problems of those who have less in life, that is *equity* and *ethics* at its best.
- If science is to serve a human purpose, what better human purpose is there?"
 - Dr. Gelia T. Castillo (National Scientist and Rural Sociologist)

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Maraming Salamat po!

