

**Addressing maternal and child health mortality  
MDGs through strengthening the health system:  
Lessons in capacity building from current  
collaborative research at the Thai district health  
service level**

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## **Background to Study**

- **In Thailand, the health care system has achieved significant progress towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals.**
- **In reaching the goals and targets, it has been recognised that value can be added to national initiatives through broader international partnerships.**
- **One such partnership is the Thai-Australian Alliance which was formed in 2004. The purpose of this partnership is to focus on capacity building in rural health service management to foster cross-cultural collaboration and knowledge transfer in this field.**

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## Capacity building and knowledge translation

### Broad Aims of Project:

- **To establish an effective and sustainable cross-cultural educational program;**
- **To develop academic and training capacity at the local level;**
- **To further strengthen the alliance in health service management between Thai and Australian health professionals and academics.**

## Building health management systems research capacity

Specific Aims of Project are to:

- *Identify research projects at the local level which have the potential to result in significant improvements in maternal, newborn and child health;*
- *Demonstrate a range of practical, low cost strategies to implement critical evidence-based interventions;*
- *Build health management systems research capacity in a group of Naresuan University Thai academics and doctoral students*

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## Focus on Maternal and Child Health

- **The capacity building project focussed on maternal and child health issues in the central region of Thailand**
- **Each year over 500,000 women around the world die due to complications related to pregnancy and childbirth**
- **Around ten million children die under the age of five – two million in the first day and another 2 million in the remainder of the first month of life (UNICEF 2008).**

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## Focus on Maternal and Child Health

- **M&CH are important Millennium Development Goals in which much progress has been made and research projects & cost effective interventions have been identified**
- **MDG 4 aims to reduce child deaths by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015**
- **MDG 5 has the target of reducing maternal deaths by three-quarters over the same period (World Vision & The Nossal Institute for Global Health 2008).**

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## Knowledge transfer & knowledge translation

*The overall goal of the project is to:*

**Ensure that health and related knowledge (research findings) are effectively translated within a model of service delivery in healthcare.**

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## Research projects using Participatory Action Research

Twenty Thai students and academics from the two universities developed five research doctoral proposals which focussed on the MDGs of Maternal and Infant mortality targets utilising a systems approach:

- **Birth asphyxia**
- **Antenatal care system**
- **Teenage pregnancy**
- **MCH referral system**
- **Low birth weights**

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## First Capacity Building Research Workshop – March 2009

The first Research Workshop, conducted at Naresuan University, worked through the Research Process including:

- Research Designs
- Setting and Sampling Strategies
- Data Collection Methods
- Data Analysis Techniques
- Potential Limitations of Study
- Ethical Considerations

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## 2 Day Research Workshop

*Purpose of the face-to-face Research Workshop was to identify:*

- Projects that would address the Maternal & Child Health MDGs;
- Research designs that would best answer the research questions;
- Target population, sampling frameworks & recruitment strategies;
- Appropriate and realistic data collection methods, including questionnaire design & development, pilot studies, individual interviews, focus group discussions;
- Potential data analysis techniques including thematic analysis, content analysis.

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## Development and Planning of Projects

*When developing and planning the projects, consideration was given to the following:*

- An approach which would take account of the local situation and which the local people would accept in order to build acceptability;
- A model that would provide quality, coordinated supervision for doctoral students utilising intensive, face-to-face workshops, videoconferencing and communication via email;
- An approach that would provide group and individual training that would allow students to engage in reflective practice; and
- Developing research projects that would result in evidence-based interventions that could be practically applied.

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## Summary of Capacity Building Research Core Activities during 2009

**March 2009: 2 day intensive research workshop at Naresuan University, including lectures, discussions & field visits**

**April/May: Research proposals submitted to Thai & Australian academics via email**

**June: Academics provide feedback to students via email**

**July: Students submit second draft of research proposals via email**

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## Summary of Capacity Building Research Core Activities during 2009

**August: Videconference held across 3 sites – Naresuan University, University of New England & Charles Darwin University to provide face-to-face feedback to doctoral students**

**October: Second 2 day intensive research workshop held at Naresuan University to further discuss data collection methods & data analysis techniques for qualitative research plus writing for publication**

**October: Students present at 1st International Conference on Health Services Delivery Management, Thailand.**

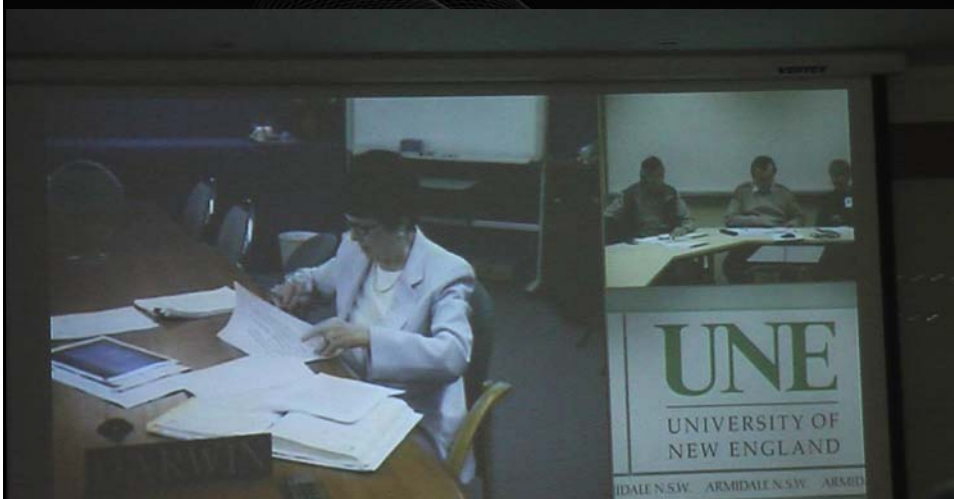
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## Thai-Australian Alliance Video Conference



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## Collaborative Supervision between UNE & Naresuan Universities



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## Evaluation of Capacity Building Project

*Evaluation methods will consist of:*

- **Formative evaluation – participants surveyed at conclusion of second Research Workshop, focus group discussion**
- **Summative evaluation – focus group discussion and survey of all stakeholders**

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## Benefits of this capacity building model

- **Lessons learnt from stand alone projects can be applied equally to large-scale strengthening of health management systems;**
- **Teamwork amongst the research participants fostered cross-cultural collaboration;**
- **Group discussions allowed participants to work through challenges in a creative and flexible manner;**

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## Benefits of this capacity building model (continued)

- **Students do not have to leave their country for extensive periods of time;**
- **Students can undertake postgraduate studies who would not normally have the opportunity;**
- **Mentoring and supervision was collaboratively undertaken by Thai and Australian academics;**
- **Linkages have been further strengthened between partners in the Thai- Australian Health Alliance that was established in 2004.**

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## Where to from here?

- **Evaluate the efficacy of this approach with a view to developing an alternative approach to capacity building at the doctoral level;**
- **Replicate this study in other settings to build on the lessons learnt;**
- **Build a collaborative network for those interested in utilising this approach to learning and capacity building.**

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**Khobkhun Ka  
Thank You**

**Any questions?**



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