

Environmental Health and Disaster Management Training Course – Bali, Indonesia (17-21 June 2013)

Ben Ryan, Director Disaster Risk Reduction, Asia-Pacific, International Federation of Environmental Health
Dr Peter Davey, President, International Federation of Environmental Health

The inaugural five-day Environmental Health and Disaster Management course was held from 17 to 21 June 2013 in Bali, Indonesia. The course was delivered in a partnership between the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Aspen Medical, National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), Indonesia Environmental Health Specialists Association (IEHSA), University of Udayana and University of Indonesia. The course attracted 27 public health and disaster management students and specialists from Australia, Indonesia, South Africa, Sudan and New Zealand. It was a unique opportunity for IFEH to test a modified version of the four-day Environmental Health Training in Emergency Response (EHTER) Course, run by the CDC and Prevention across the USA, in the Asia-Pacific region.

The teaching team included Dr Peter Davey, President, IFEH, Ben Ryan, Director Disaster Risk Reduction (Asia-Pacific), IFEH, Tim Hatch, Director Planning and Logistics, Alabama Department of Public Health and Dr Lise Martel, CDC Center for Global Health.

The course identified and discussed the environmental health risks and mitigation strategies in a disaster setting. This included discussion around the key risks such as those relating to drinking water, shelters, overcrowding, food safety, wastewater, disease-causing vectors, solid waste and hazardous materials.

The course concluded with a group exercise, which focused on what actions public health and disaster management professionals need to take when preparing for and responding to a flood. This included an overview and discussion of possible disaster response strategies and tools that can mitigate environmental health risks in the disaster setting.

An evaluation of the feedback found to be very successful with 93% of participants indicating it met expectations. The awareness level of environmental health risks associated with a disaster increased on average by 20% for each participant.

The course could not have been successful without this partnership approach and the interaction of the participants.

As part of continuing to build environmental health capacity globally, IFEH, CDC and Environmental Health Australia will be partnering to deliver a five-day course in Townsville, Australia, from 25 to 30 August 2013. IFEH is willing to deliver the course anywhere globally.

For further please visit www.ifeh.org or contact Ben Ryan via e-mail benjamin.ryan@my.jcu.edu.au.

