

Name: Munasinghe Nimali Lakmini

Student ID: 201626059

Course: Masters in Environmental Sciences

A two week training course of Health Emergencie in Large Populations



Course participants and faculty members

Health Emergencies in Large Populations (HELP) course, was held in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), World Health Organization (WHO), and University of Hawaii (UH). This was a two week training course held at Kalia Rooms 1&2 on the first Floor of Hale Koa Hotel, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA from 30 July – 10 August 2018.

Objectives of the course:

- Describe the essential public health, health care, management, planning, legal and ethical issues and approaches in humanitarian action.
- Analyze humanitarian and health needs utilizing a multi-disciplinary approach.
- Assess, plan, manage, and evaluate actions in response to major humanitarian crises.

HELP Course Participants

For 2018 HELP course, 36 participants had been selected from 17 countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region and North America. 2018 HELP course faculty members have

backgrounds working for UN agencies, international organizations, academic institutions and international nongovernmental organizations. They have spent the majority of their careers in the field responding to humanitarian crises.

What I learned during the course:

Every module seeks a balance between:

- Lecture or presentation;
- Exercise, video, or simulation, and;
- Group work and general discussion.

The following topics were discussed during the course and these were accompanied by case studies, group work, exercises and a disaster coordination simulation:

1. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Humanitarian Crises
2. Sheltering and Habitat in Humanitarian Crises
3. Field Epidemiology in Humanitarian Crises
4. Communicable Disease Control and Prevention in Humanitarian Crises
5. Non-Communicable Disease Control and Prevention in Humanitarian Crises
6. Sexual and Reproductive Health Needs in Humanitarian Crises
7. Mental Health Considerations in Humanitarian Crises
8. Health Emergency Management Planning and Considerations
9. Management of Mass Fatalities
10. Disaster Coordination Simulation
11. Role of Communications and Social Media in Humanitarian Crises
12. International Humanitarian Law

This training was further strengthened through a field visit to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on Ford Island and also a visit to the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance in Hawaii. We also had the opportunity to strengthen our friendships and exchange our cultures during the BBQ party organized by the course coordinators. The simulation exercise conducted at the final day, gave us the practical experience about the difficulties we have to face during the management of a disaster situation.

Finally, this was a very successful course which enhance my knowledge and skills on Health emergencies and Disaster Management. It enabled me to build my confidence for active participation and contribution in future disasters or emergencies in national and global level.

