

Empowering Communities through University Partnerships in Public Health

Anna Robinson-Pant (PI) and Laura Burke (RA) have just returned from the Philippines, where the University of Santo Tomas (UST) hosted an international conference as part of the MRC-funded CORTH project *Empowering Communities through University Partnerships in Public Health*. Just one day before the conference, the Mayor of Manila announced a 'heat ban', meaning that no students or staff were allowed in universities or schools due to temperatures of over 40 degrees. The project team rose to the overnight challenge of finding facilitators and alternative activities so that 600-plus participants could participate online through Zoom and Facebook Live. Around 80 medical school staff and students were still able to attend in person as they were based in the UST campus hospital.

This hybrid conference brought together researchers, educators, policy makers and community activists from public health, medicine and community development to share research insights and develop interdisciplinary collaboration. A key theme at the conference was around decolonising and indigenising medical education within the Philippines and Nepal, including exploring the potential contribution of ethnographic and participatory research methodology within undergraduate and postgraduate community placements. Medical faculty and students were introduced to ethnography and PAR through hands-on workshops, and a World Café was facilitated to develop ideas on how to strengthen community-university partnerships.

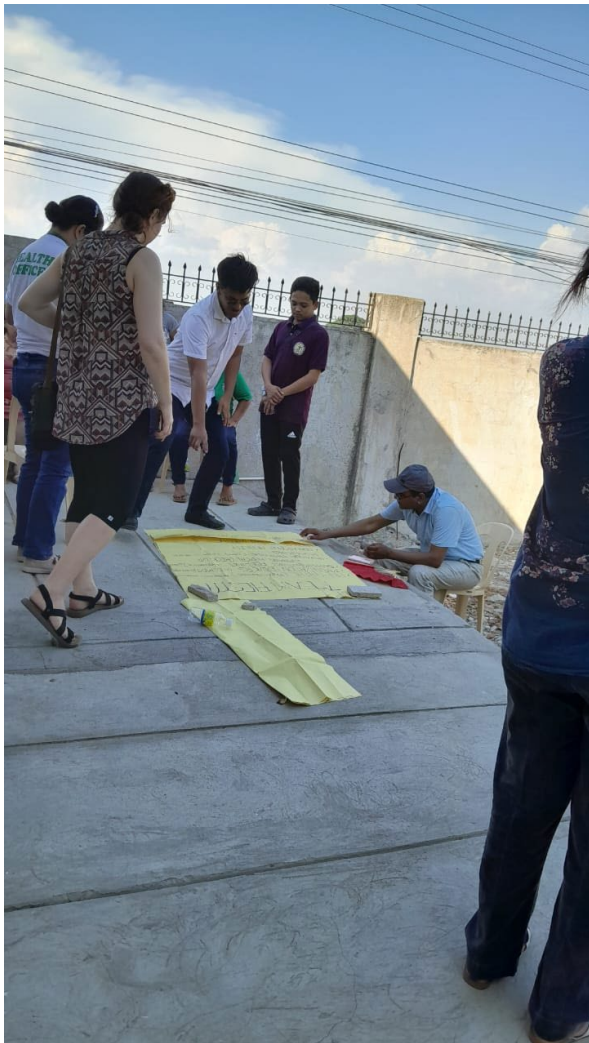
Seven members of the Nepal research team travelled to the Philippines for the conference, which was combined with visits to public health facilities and programmes in a barangay near the university. The project team also organised a workshop with stakeholders in community health in Calasiao in Pangasinan. Many thanks to the UST project team, headed by Prof. Camilla Vizconde and Prof. Tricia Bautista, for hosting such a successful conference – particularly given the challenges of the unprecedented heatwave.



A photovoice activity on 'learning spaces' in the Participatory Action Research workshop



University of Santo Tomas conference participants



Stakeholders' Forum in Pangasinan



BEYOND BOUNDARIES: FOSTERING MULTISTAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

Stakeholders' Forum

April 29, 2024
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

MARIE POUSSEPIN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Dominican Sisters of the Presentation Compound, Brgy. Songkoy, Calasiao, Pangasinan, Philippines

