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A PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH  
A CANADIAN COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE  
IN ECOSYSTEM APPROACHES  
TO HUMAN HEALTH WITH  
A TRAINING AND AWARDS PROGRAM  
FOR ECOHEALTH RESEARCH IN  
INTERNATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT  
SETTINGS

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SUMMARY OF THE TECHNICAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY TO  
DECEMBER 2009 PRESENTED TO IDRC THE 31<sup>ST</sup> OF DECEMBER

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA,  
UNIVERSITY OF QUÉBEC AT MONTRÉAL  
CANADA

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## DELIVERY OF THE SHORT COURSE IN ECOSYSTEM APPROACHES TO HEALTH

Our principal activity for 2009 was the delivery of a **short course in Ecosystem Approaches to Health**, hosted by the University of Guelph's Ontario Veterinary College and Department of Philosophy, from July 6-17, 2009. 20 student and 4 professional development participants graduated from the course. **Methodological sessions** were conducted throughout the 11 days. Students were given a plasticized blank **poster** template to use in developing their ideas for their own research. **The learning scenario**, Hamilton and Hamilton Harbour, was designed to be interactive, involving field trips and interviews with stakeholders. Participants were supplied with an aerial map of the region and a disposable camera. These were used to develop **rich picture maps**. Students performed a **fish necropsy** on fish which were collected from Hamilton Harbour. Students identified stakeholder groups, and designed and ran a **stakeholder meeting**.

## COPEH- CANADA RESEARCH GRANT

The 4 recipients of the 2009 CoPEH-Canada research Grant are:

- **Marie-Ève Maillé**, Université du Québec à Montréal, Communication sociale et publique
- **Vi Nguyen**, University of Guelph, Population Medicine
- **Jennifer Spiegel**, Concordia University/University of London Interdisciplinary Humanities/Centre for Cultural Studies
- **Jennifer Vansteenkiste**, University of Western Ontario, Department of Geography

## NODAL ACTIVITIES

**Québec-Acadie-Atlantiques:** Several meetings were held at UQAM during 2009. Working groups were formed to address the following themes:

- **Processes:** to uncover from the members' work what using an ecosystem approach really means. Sub-working groups of the Processes theme were created;
- **Interfaces:** to create/reinforce relationships with partners (civil society, government or research) on common themes;
- **Application:** to develop "ecosystem thinking" about concrete and local problems to eventually build a collective research project.

The Québec-Atlantique node received 3000\$ from CIHR to host two Café Scientifique on the theme: Is our environment poisoning our children?

**Ontario:** The Ontario node worked primarily on three projects during 2009:

1. The CoPEH-Can annual meeting was held in Guelph on February 19 and 20, 2009.
2. A symposium exploring how ecosystem approaches to health could be integrated in training and academic curricula was held at the Ontario Veterinary College, Wednesday February 18, 2009.
3. The EcoHealth Short Course was given during the weeks of July 6 and July 20, 2009 at the University of Guelph.

**West:** Pot-luck gatherings were held in 2009, providing an informal way for team members, alumni and others interested in Ecohealth to meet and discuss relevant issues.

The Western node held an activity on May 11th, to coincide with the visit of Jonathan Patz (President of the International Society for Ecology & Health) to Vancouver. At the end of May, Margot and Beth travelled to Ecuador with members of the Tier 1 project (Jerry Spiegel and Annalee Yassi's project) to host a workshop in Cuenca with alumni who had completed the pilot Masters of Health with an Ecosystem Focus (*Maestria en Salud con enfoque de Ecosistema*). The Western Node hosted a Celebration on September 2, 2009. Following Margot Parkes taking a position at UNBC in November, the team has focused on planning for a series of events in 2010 focused on "Building Career Pathways in Ecohealth."

## RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

A medium-term survey was sent to the participants of the 2008 course in order to explore the relationships within the CoPEH, the development of collaborative practices and the integration of ecohealth into research and practice. A series of in-depth interviews was also conducted. The results are currently being analysed. The results of the 2008 course evaluation were analysed and compiled into an internal report for feedback and discussion among the team, and an 8 page summary document available in French and English on the new research page of the CoPEH-Canada website. These findings provide a base-line in the longer term follow-up with course participants.

## NETWORKING AND COMMUNICATION

Our **website** ([www.CoPEH-Canada.org](http://www.CoPEH-Canada.org)) served as a communication tool and also as a platform for the course application process. Our **communication list** includes 755 researchers, practitioners, policy makers, NGO workers, and grassroots organizations. A **listserv** was created by one of the 2008 EcoHealth students in order to be able to send and receive group messages from the other CoPEH-Canada students. The CoPEH-Canada team members worked on three important **profiling projects**. We collectively wrote a **vignette** about the CoPEH-Canada for an upcoming IDRC book, we are working on a draft of a **narrative or change story** about the CoPEH-Canada and we outlined a **vision statement**.

We have continued to be in contact with the international CoPEHs since Merida 2008. We are helping to coordinate an international CoPEH presence at the 2010 London EcoHealth conference. The Québec-Atlantique node is actively collaborating with the CoPEH-AOC and CoPEH-MOAN to collectively manage a site on health on the l'Organisation internationale de la francophonie's website (<http://www.mediaterre.org/> and <http://www.mediaterre.org/afrique/actu,20091203164823.html>). Important links were also made with the emerging group of Ecohealth researchers and practitioners in South East Asia.

## COMPLIMENTARY FUNDING

We held a two-day meeting in November in Montréal in which the primary goal was to address our strategy for seeking additional funding and this will continue to be an important topic throughout 2010. Some complementary funding has already come into the Québec-Atlantique Node.