

CAPACITY BUILDING for the promotion of PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Achievements, lessons learned, and challenges

In 2004 in response to the global challenges of a pandemic of physical inactivity and increasing chronic diseases, the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC), the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) and the Center for the Study of Physical Fitness Laboratory of São Caetano do Sul (CELAFISCS) began organizing international courses to build capacity for the promotion of physical activity (PA). Many other organizations around the world have joined this effort over the last decade.

Why is it important to build capacity for PA?

“Physical inactivity is pandemic, a leading cause of death in the world, and clearly one of the top four pillars of a non-communicable-diseases strategy. However, the role of physical activity continues to be undervalued despite evidence of its protective effects and the cost burden posed by present levels of physical inactivity globally. There is an urgent need to build global capacity” (Kohl y cols. 2012)*.

What were the goals?

- Provide background information on PA promotion strategies
- Provide advanced training and stimulate regional and national networks to develop public policy that promotes PA research and programs
- Support the implementation of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Strategy for Diet, Physical Activity, and Health and the WHO action plans for preventing non-communicable diseases

Topics included in the courses



Figure 1. Topics covered in the courses



44 courses in
20 countries in
the Americas, Africa,
Asia, the Middle
East and the Pacific.



More than **3000 professionals**
with diverse backgrounds trained
from **49 countries**.



More than **1000 training hours** in PA
promotion, strategies,
benefits, and research.



An average of **4 international**
and **3 national faculty**
members per course.

* Kohl HW, Craig CL, Lambert EV, Inoue S, Alkandari JR, Leetongin G, Kahlmeier S. (2012). The pandemic of physical inactivity: global action for public health. Lancet Jul 21; 380(9838): 294-305.

Information

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For more information about the network:

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Who were the leaders?



Achievements

Consolidation of a global network

3 lead organizations began the process in 2004

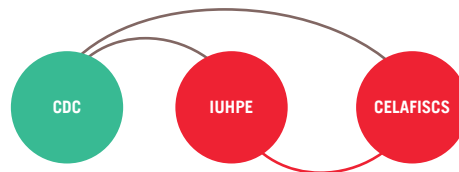


Figure 2. Network of the organizations that began the capacity building process in 2004

64 organizations make up a collaborative network 9 years later

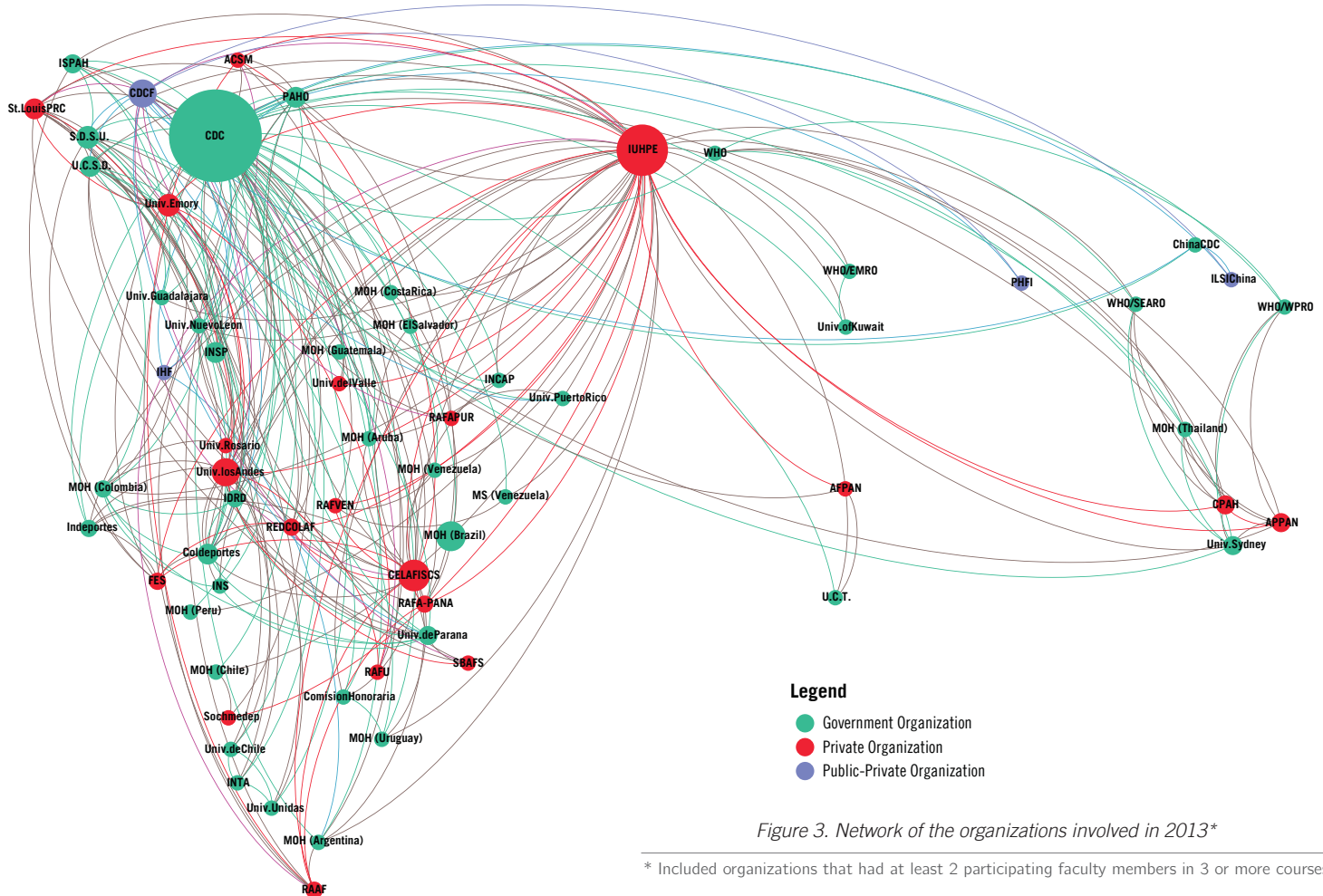


Figure 3. Network of the organizations involved in 2013*

* Included organizations that had at least 2 participating faculty members in 3 or more courses

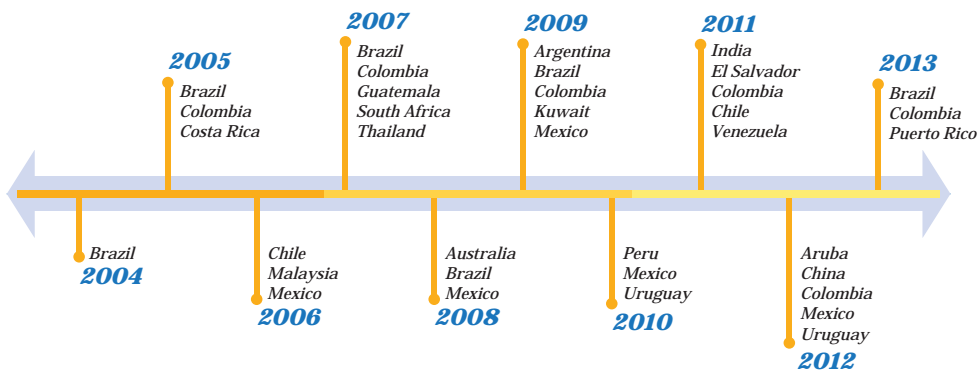


Figure 4. Host countries

Lessons learned

Courses are unique opportunities to:

- Inspire interest in PA program evaluation.
- Expand knowledge on policies, programs and state-of-the art PA research.
- Create connections and foundations for collaborative networks.

Participants particularly value:

- Sessions on: Evidence on the benefits of PA for individuals and communities, program evaluation (including measuring and monitoring PA and the use of specific tools) and effective strategies to promote PA.
- Tutorials and teamwork.
- Opportunities for expert consultation and discussion.
- Space for networking and exchanging ideas with other participants and the faculty.
- Activity breaks and healthy food within the courses.
- A well defined and focused agenda.

Suggestions to make the most of the courses:

- Provide supporting material in advance.
- Stimulate explicit reflection and discussions on how to translate the courses' lessons to daily practice.
- Promote hands-on learning.
- Present specific local examples.

What to focus on next?

- **Competencies and skills.**
- **Specific successful advocacy, network, and coalition-building experiences and strategies.**
- **Specific evaluation methods:** Instruments and tools, data collection, analysis and interpretation using tutorials.
- **PA research priorities**
- **Global expansion** with the **support of the International Society for Physical Activity and Health (ISPAH)**



Participants' voices

"It re-instates (sic) my vigor and passion for physical activity by being inspired by such enthusiastic presenters (sic) and the evidence that solutions and prevention are possible." (Participant, Australia course)



Mexico course 2006

"The course made me realize that we were doing things but that we didn't know where we were going, what we were aiming for." (Coordinator, Ciclovía program, Colombia course)



South Africa course 2007

"The course allowed me to get to know successful and unsuccessful experiences from the region, and to learn from and reproduce them in my country." (Sports medicine doctor, Uruguay course)



Colombia course 2011

The course is successful in raising skills and confidence and mobilizing a skilled, committed, diverse advocacy force." (Participant, Australia course)

"The goal of these courses is to mold a new generation of public health professionals who can carry out and apply cutting edge research in the context of their own countries. The courses have succeeded in this beyond our wildest dreams." (Michael Pratt)

Participants' voices

"At present, there are no studies related to physical activity in Nepal but the training has increased a lot of (sic) enthusiasm and we are ready to join hands at the South Asian and international level to participate in PA-related research projects."

(Participant, India course)



Australia and the Pacific course 2008

"Something really important is that at the end of the course, 20 participants decided to join together with the goal of creating a network in the immediate future."

(Organizer, Mexico course)



China course 2012

"These courses promote the creation of an academic community and strengthen international links and the possibility of continuing to support Colombian students' training on PA promotion." (Psychology PhD student, Colombia course)

Challenges: What's next?

- Offer courses and tutorials focused on the specific needs of researchers, policy makers, and practitioners.
- Use new communication technologies to enhance:
 - Communication between participants and faculty
 - Connections established during the course
 - Follow-up and tutoring strategies
- Design online courses to cover specific topics in depth or to complement existing in-person courses.
- Promote participation of decision makers to multiply the effect of the courses.
- Include practitioners as faculty members.
- Include faculty from different disciplines and sectors.
- Bridge the gap between research and practice: Design fact sheets and policy briefs and disseminate in local languages.

Recommendations

Policy recommendations

Design evidence and behavior change theory based programs.

Use logic models to guide and monitor programs and strategies.

Build on other sectors' initiatives (e.g. urban planning, transportation, recreation and sports, and education).

Facilitate collaborations between researchers and practitioners in order to better utilize evidence for decision making and improving programs.

Consider multi-level strategies that impact the environment, populations, and societal structures.

Future research recommendations

Study PA determinants and correlates in low- and middle-income countries across different levels and domains.

Conduct community participatory research.

Use formative research to guide PA promotion programs.

Incorporate different disciplines with new perspectives, questions, and responses to better address the challenges of an ever more complex world.

Produce the evidence that is needed where it is needed: Evaluate local programs with local research teams.

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Diagramación: Diana Fernández

