

# HAI/WHO Pharmaceutical Promotion Manual Still Key to Combating Promotion around the World



Regulators in Kabul, Afghanistan, discuss the establishment of a regulatory framework and ethical code of practice to control pharmaceutical promotion during a week-long WHO/HAI session.

by TIM REED

Health Action International (HAI) continues to use the teaching manual, [Understanding & Responding to Pharmaceutical Promotion](#), in many settings around the world. It remains a core HAI strategy to combat promotion, and the manual is an excellent tool for awareness-raising, and embedding ethical responses to promotion. Also, when used in conjunction with the [regulatory assessment tool](#), it is a core component for guiding the development of legislation.

As part of the MeTA campaign, HAI has presented the manual in Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Philippines, Uganda and Zambia. Notably, in the Philippines, we were invited back to hold three, two-day workshops for pharmacy students. The workshops took place in Manila (2) and Cebu (1), and in all three workshops, there were over 100 participants.

In Cebu, the objective was to train 120 pharmacy school faculty, including six deans. The workshop comprised half of participants' annual continuing professional development/education (CMD/CME) points—the first time a HAI promotions workshop has been accredited for this purpose. The six deans from schools of pharmacy in the audience drove a process that resulted in the formation of a new pressure group to reinforce ethical practice in pharmacy schools. Indeed, in all three workshops, delegates themselves elected to write an ethical 'pledge' to rebut pharmaceutical promotion and amplify the message that promotion distorts the rational use of medicines.

In another setting, the HAI promotions message is a good 'hook' on which to hang international political economy of medicines, and an introduction to HAI, so global health policy students, in particular, prove a fertile audience. We have taught in Latvia at a full Summer School, with HAI members Health Projects for Latvia, and the University of Gronigen, the Vrije Universiteit, the University of Amsterdam and Kings College London, among others.

As I write this, I am in Kabul, Afghanistan, with WHO EMRO, halfway through a week-long

mission to establish both a regulatory framework for the control of promotion, and an ethical code of practice for the sector. The participants are mainly regulators, and results will be presented to the Minister of Health and further refined, with HAI's help in 2016.[/vc\_column\_text][[/vc\_column][[/vc\_row]