

## IIFARMU: a French Initiative in Cambodia, Laos and the Indian Ocean

IIFARMU (Institut International de Formation en Anesthésie, Réanimation et Médecine d'Urgence) was created in 1991 as an association of anaesthetists and intensivists, working in partnership with universities and university hospitals in France, with the aim of providing quality training programmes in anaesthesiology, intensive care and emergency medicine for developing countries.

The association provides:

- An evaluation and determination of need
- Assesses the feasibility of establishing training programmes
- Supplies complete programmes (theoretical courses, practical training, and visit to French hospitals, evaluations and diplomas supported by French universities) in anaesthesiology, intensive care medicine and emergency medicine.

The aim of these projects is to help developing countries progressively provide their own autonomous programmes and raise the standing of the speciality in their country, with the ultimate objective of improving the quality of patient care.

Today, the association consists of more than 45 physicians and



nurses in France and has on-going projects in Southeast Asia and Indian Ocean in collaboration with Bordeaux Medical University and Bordeaux University Hospital.

### KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

IIFARMU has provided support for the creation of a nursing school specialising in anaesthesiology and intensive care in association "Médecins sans Frontière" from 1991 to 1998. The course lasts two years, is full-time and includes both practical and theoretical training.

IIFARMU provided all the training (theory and practice), supervised the selection of students and conducted all evaluations for the first three graduating classes. It then helped the Cambodian trainers to take charge of the fourth and fifth graduating classes. Over 8 years, more than 60 nurses have been trained and obtained a diploma. 90% of them are still working in the field and are recognised as competent and essential for the running of operating theatres and intensive care units all over the country.

IIFARMU is now assisting the Association of Nurse Anaesthetists of Cambodia (AISARC) and supports their annual meeting. A sixth graduating class is about to start in 2004 entirely under

Cambodian supervision and with local financial support.

### Certificate of specialisation in anaesthesiology and intensive care medicine for physicians

Two graduating classes, each of 10 physicians, completed their training between 1992 and 1998 with support from IIFARMU. It provided the complete programme of training, including candidate selection, theoretical



and practical training in Cambodia, evaluations, and a six month training period in France. The programme lasts three and a half years and is full-time. It is supported by the universities of Bordeaux II and Paris XIII and a diploma is awarded by these universities.

The graduate doctors are now recognised as specialists in Cambodia, and most of them hold positions of responsibility in Cambodian hospitals and participate in the ongoing training of other nurses and doctors.

The training programme has been under the control of the Phnom Penh University of Medical Science since 1998 but with IIFARMU and the University of Bordeaux II and Paris XIII assisting in the programme with regular evaluations and reinforcement training as well as continuing to host the physicians when they



visit French hospitals at the completion of their training.

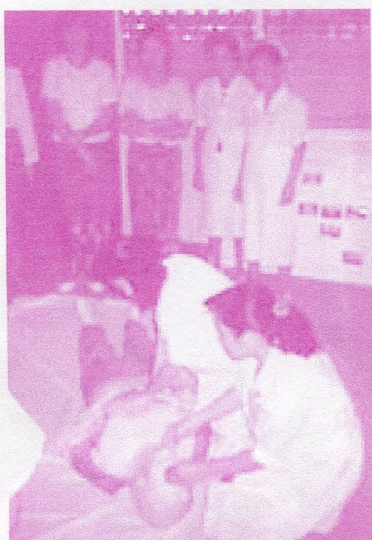
The anaesthesiologists of Cambodia have now formed a Society of Anaesthesiologists (SCARMU) that organizes regular activities and holds an annual meeting.

**On-going Projects include:**

- support for AISARC and its annual meeting
- support for trainers at the nurse anaesthetist training school (6th graduating class and thereafter)
- evaluation and assessment of anaesthetic practice in Cambodia
- support for the annual meeting of physician anaesthetists (SACRMU)
- support to future graduating classes
- hosting of physicians in French hospitals

**PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF LAOS**

In Laos, the training programme for anaesthesiology, intensive care medicine and emergency medicine started in 1989.



From 1989 to 1994, short training sessions (practical and refresher courses) were conducted. At the same time, we assessed the training needs in anaesthesiology and identified potential Lao trainers.

Between 1994 and 1998, with the French organisation (Comité de Coopération avec le Laos), we assisted in the development of the main anaesthesia and intensive care unit at the Mahosot Hospital. The aim of this programme was to rehabilitate and re-equip the surgical units and the anaesthesia and intensive care units so that they could become a national referral and training centre for future Lao doctors and nurses.

From 1996 to 2000 the first class of doctors with diplomas in anaesthesiology and intensive care was trained. Twelve doctors obtained a specialist diploma from the University of Bordeaux and are now recognised as specialists and trainers in their country.

In 2002, a second course with 10 specialists started, is currently on-going and they should obtain their diploma in 2005. In addition, training in emergency medicine was started for doctors from provincial hospitals and 18 doctors obtained their certificate in 2003. A second course is currently underway.

Details of the ongoing programmes:

**Certificate of specialisation in anaesthesiology and intensive care medicine for physicians (CESARMU)**

This programme is based on European programmes for

specialists but adapted to the needs of Laos.

Physicians are selected by competitive examination and undertake a full-time training course lasting three and a half years. It consists of:

- Full-time practice in a Lao referral centres, supervised by Lao trainers and members of IIFARMU
- 6-month training in a French university hospital 12 course modules each lasting 15 days
- ongoing and final evaluation the drafting of a final report (mémoire)



The participation of Lao physicians in the programme is progressively increasing with the aim of making the programmes self-sufficient. After obtaining their diploma, most of the physicians take on responsibilities in the main hospital of the country and join the training team. Teacher training is included for future trainers.

**Emergency Medicine**

The Emergency Medicine programme is aimed at Lao physicians from mid-size hospitals at the provincial and district level. It seeks to improve emergency care in rural areas taking into account both the lack of doctors and facilities.

The training programme is held in Vientiane, is very basic





and consists of four modules on the management of practical problems. The training is conducted in the Lao language by Lao trainers under IIFARMU supervision.

This programme is original in that it uses Lao experts as trainers but with assistance for their teaching techniques as well as supervision of the content and objectives of the course. This is a "trial" programme for the Lao trainers aimed at helping them become autonomous.

**Evaluation and training of nurses in intensive care at Mahosot Hospital**

Recovery room and intensive care unit nurses attended a programme aimed at improving post-operative care. This programme was largely conducted by Lao physicians with some input from French physicians and specialised nurses.

Continuing projects include:

- The creation of a school for nurse anaesthetists
- Support for the training programme for Physicians (the third graduating class will start in 2004/2005 and thereafter the programme will be autonomous)
- Support for the emergency medicine trainers (third graduating class and thereafter)
- Creation and support for annual meetings in emergency medicine and anaesthesiology and critical care

- Regional exchange projects and training programmes
- An assessment of the quality in peri-operative care in Laos and Cambodia and an evaluation of those who have been trained in our programmes.

**Indian Ocean**

Between 1998 and 2002, IFFARMU has participated in the training of 16 physicians to enable them to obtain a diploma as specialists in anaesthesiology and intensive care, following the same principles that were applied in Laos and Cambodia.

The project called PARMU, was conducted under the supervision of Bordeaux University and ISPED (Institute of Epidemiology and Development) and financed by French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Members of IIFARMU supervised the training of the students and assisted them during their training period (one year) in France.

The students, selected by competitive examination came from Mauritius, Madagascar, the Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Seychelles and Mozambique.

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IIFARMU is a Non-Governmental Organisation, with the official status of "general interest association" under the 1901 French law for non-profit organisations, allowing it to receive public and private donations.

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