

Research Advisory Board

To strengthen its research capabilities, ZFF formed a Research Advisory Board to provide technical expertise in the development of academic rigor for research works and to increase research output utilization at the local and national levels. The advisory board is composed of health, research and governance experts, who will guide ZFF in setting its research agenda and reviewing research studies to be funded by ZFF.

Research Advisory Board members:



Cecilia S. Acuin, MD, PhD

Fields of expertise:

- Nutrition
- Public health
- Family medicine

Dr. Acuin has over 25 years of experience as professor, clinician and researcher. She is the chief science research specialist at the Department of Science and Technology's Food and Nutrition Research Institute. She is a faculty of graduate studies in the Philippine Women's University's School of Nutrition and is also part of the Universal Health Care Study Group at the College of Public Health, University of the Philippines (UP), Manila.

In 2013, Acuin was appointed assistant director of the Institute of Health Policy and Development Studies in UP Manila, where she served as researcher and professor for over a decade. She also worked in the different departments of the Research Institute of Tropical Medicine and was Executive Director of the De La Salle University Center for Indigenous Medicine. Acuin authored a number of papers that appeared in UP Manila Journal, Acta Medica, The Lancet, Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative and the World Health Organization.

Acuin has a doctorate in Nutrition minor in Nutrition Epidemiology and Risk Communication from Cornell University. She earned her master's degree in Medical Anthropology from the University of Connecticut Storrs and her medical degree from UP Manila.



Maria Ela Atienza, PhD

Fields of expertise:

- Local politics and devolution
- Health politics and policy
- Human security
- Women and politics

Dr. Atienza is an associate professor at the Department of Political Science of the University of the Philippines (UP), Diliman, where she has been a faculty member since 1993. She is the present editor of the Philippine Political Science Journal, which is an Institute for Scientific Information journal of the Philippine Political Science Association and co-published by Routledge.

For two years (2007-2009), Atienza served as president of the Philippine Political Science Association. She was also director of UP Diliman's Third World Studies Center. She was a core faculty member for the Population-Reproductive Health-Environment Leadership Development Training Program for Local Governments, which was funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and managed by the Social Sciences and Philosophy Research Foundation of the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy of UP Diliman.

Atienza has been a recipient of various commendations and awards including the Centennial Professorial Chair Award, Centennial Faculty Development Award, International Publication Award and Young Scholar Dissertation Award.

She has authored several papers that were published in the Philippine Political Science Journal, International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR) Conference Working Papers and the Journal of Democracy and Human Rights. She has also worked on various researches in collaboration with local and international partners.

Atienza has a doctorate in Political Science from Kobe University's Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies. She has executive master's degree in International and European Relations from the University of Amsterdam and a Political Science degree from UP Diliman.



Maridel Borja, PhD

Fields of expertise:

- Epidemiology
- Biostatistics
- Research Methods
- Burden of disease studies

Dr. Borja has 25 years of experience in public health and the academe. She is a professor of epidemiology and biostatistics at the College of Public Health of the University of the Philippines, Manila (UPM) and is affiliated with the UPM National Institutes of Health-Technical Review Board and the Philippine Tuberculosis Society. Borja has served as consultant for the research studies of local and international agencies like the Department of Health, United States Agency for International Aid, Japan International Cooperation Agency and World Health Organization (WHO). Focus of these studies included tuberculosis, dengue, malaria, leptospirosis, HIV, asthma, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

Borja was among the personalities featured in the book, "A Century of Women in Health Sciences 1900-2000 AD," which showcases the significant contributions of Filipino women in various fields of health sciences.

Borja has authored books published by Elsevier, WHO and the University of the Philippines Open University. Her research papers have also been published in Acta Medica, The Lancet and International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases.

A summa cum laude graduate of B.S. Medical Technology from the University of Santo Tomas, Borja has a doctorate in Epidemiology from the University of California. She has two master's degrees, one in Biostatistics from the University of London and the other in Public Health-Biostatistics from UP Manila. She also took postgraduate training programs on Epidemiology of HIV/AIDS and Tropical Epidemiology.



Exaltacion E. Lamberte, PhD

Fields of expertise:

- Health system development
- Poverty and social inequality
- Social policy and development
- Research management of institutional research

Dr. Lamberte has more than 30 years of experience as educator and sociologist. She is a university fellow at the De La Salle University (DLSU) Social Development Research Center and served as dean of the College of the Liberal Arts at the Behavioral Sciences Department of DLSU from 2008 to 2011. She is a member of the Research Advisory Board of the East Asian Development Network.

Lamberte worked as social health consultant for local and international agencies including the Department of Health, United Nations Children's Fund, World Health Organization, United Nations Population Fund, Johns Hopkins University and World Bank.

She is a published author of four books on poverty, health systems performance and development and studies on street children, youth and disadvantaged families. Her research writings have also appeared in the publications of the Philippine Institute for Developmental Studies, National Statistics Office, UNICEF-Manila, Philippine Sociological Review, British Journal of Psychiatry and China Academy of Social Sciences.

An English Literature graduate of St. Vincent's College, Lamberte earned her master's degree and doctorate in Sociology from the University of the Philippines, Diliman. She also took a postdoctoral study in Public and Social Policy in Harvard Kennedy School.



Madeleine De Rosas-Valera, MD, MScIH

Fields of expertise:

- Health Financing
- Quality in Healthcare
- Health Technology Assessment
- Health System
- Public Health

Presently a director of the TAO Corp., Dr. Valera has 25 years of public health experience. She was Department of Health undersecretary for Health Policy, Finance and Research Department (2012-2013). She was a technical officer in the World Health Organization-Western Pacific Office and a senior vice president in the Philippine Health Insurance Corp.

Valera headed the undertaking for the establishment of a national policy framework for the government's "Doctors to the Barrio" (DTTB) program, which aims to provide doctors in the country's rural communities. She took part in the creation and completion of the Philippine National Drug Formulary, Drug Price Reference Index and Health Technology Assessment and PhilHealth's Quality Assurance Program-Benchbook.

Valera has authored articles that have appeared in the Australian Health Review, WHO, International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research. She has written papers on primary healthcare, health devolution and women's health.

Valera has a master's degree in International Health from Heidelberg University. She obtained her medical degree from the De La Salle University and completed courses and programs on Occupational Health and Safety and on Hospital Administration (University of the Philippines, Manila), Health Economics (Monash University), Leadership in Health Reform-Gustav Nossal (La Trobe, Melbourne University) and Pharmaceutical Policy (Harvard Medical School).