Terminal Evaluation

Asia

1. Outline of the Project

Country:
Mongolia

Project title:
Maternal and Child Health Project

Issue/Sector:
Health/Medical Care

Cooperation scheme:
Project-type Technical Cooperation

Division in charge:
First Medical Cooperation Division,
Medical Cooperation Department

Total cost:

Period of Cooperation 1 October 1997 - 30 September 2002

Partner Country's Implementing Organization:
Ministry of Health, Social and Welfare (MOHSW)

Supporting Organization in Japan:
Health and Welfare Department of Chiba Prefecture, Chiba
Serum Institute ,
Toho University, International University of Health and Welfare

Related Cooperation:

1-1 Background of the Project

In Mongolia, the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) was initiated based on existing immunization activities starting since as early in the 1960s. Vaccine procurement, with assistance from international organizations, assured high immunization coverage. In the meantime, Iodine Deficiency Disorder was acknowledged as a serious problem in Mongolia. According to the results of a national survey on goiter in 1992 conducted by the government with the assistance of U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the rate of hypertrophied thyroid gland caused by IDD in students and women of the childbearing age at the capital, Ulaanbaatar, was over 40%, and many intellectual developmental disorders and stillbirths that might have been caused by IDD were observed. Therefore, it was necessary to take urgent countermeasures such as dissemination of iodized salt. The government also joined the "World Summit for Children" held by the United Nations in September 1990, where the "National Action Plan for Development of Children in Mongolia" was developed in May 1993, and actively promoted were EPI and IDD countermeasures in a plan under strong instruction by the government.

Under these circumstances, the government of Mongolia requested from the government of Japan to launch a project-type technical cooperation on IDD and EPI countermeasures to reduce IDD and accomplish self-management of EPI for maternal and child health and primary health care (PHC) as a part of the program.

1-2 Project Overview

The project implemented training to the staff of the Ministry of Health, Social and Welfare (MOHSW) for purposes such as fostering the staff, epidemiology study, laboratory development (study room) and enhancement of diagnosis techniques, development of cold chain and logistics (low temperature logistics by refrigeration), and diffusion activities, aiming at the self management of EPI and bringing IDD under control in Mongolia.
[EPI]

(1) Overall Goal

To promote maternal and child health in Mongolia.

(2) Project Purpose

To strengthen the prevention system for EPI target diseases in Mongolia.

(3) Outputs

1) Immunization coverage rate is increased in towns and villages.
2) Surveillance system on EPI targeted diseases is improved.
3) Cold chain logistics is improved.
4) Medical workers improve their techniques on EPI.
5) Mongolian people raise their consciousness and increase knowledge on EPI.
[IDD]

(1) Overall Goal

To promote maternal and child health in Mongolia.

(2) Project Purpose

IDD is brought under control in Mongolia.

(3) Outputs

1) Monitoring system is established for IDD elimination.
2) Salteries at project sites (target areas) manufacture appropriate iodized salt.
3) Iodized salt is disseminated at project sites (target areas).
4) Mongolian people increase their knowledge, attitude and actions to the importance of using iodized salt.

(4) Inputs

Japanese side:

Long-term Experts	6	Equipment	165 million yen
Short-term Experts	23	Trainees received	13
Local Cost	70 million yen		

Mongolian Side:

Counterparts for EPI	31
Local Cost for EPI	1.12 million US dollar (approximately 149 million yen)
Counterparts for IDD	10
Local Cost for IDD	51.94 million tugrik (approximately 6 million yen)
Land and Facilities	

2. Evaluation Team

Members of Evaluation Team

Team Leader/General: Kiyomichi FUJISAKI, Managing Director, Medical Cooperation Department, JICA
IDD Sector: Chieri YAMADA, Professor, School of Health Sciences, Hirosaki University
EPI Sector: Hiromu YOSHIDA, Senior Researcher, National Institute of Infectious Diseases
Evaluation Analysis: Keiko NAMIKI, System Science Consultants Inc.
Cooperation Planning : Kiyoka TAKEUCHI, First Medical Cooperation Division, Medical Cooperation Department , JICA

Period of Evaluation 1 June 2002 - 19 June 2002

Type of Evaluation:
Terminal Evaluation

3. Results of Evaluation

3-1 Summary of Evaluation Results

[EPI]

(1) Relevance

The project is in line with the "National Action Plan for Development of Children in Mongolia" settled by the government of Mongolia and the contents of the plan and study methods were appropriately settled in conformity with the national standards which were established in collaboration with international organizations (WHO, UNICEF).

(2) Effectiveness

The originally settled purpose covered too broad area, and its correction was difficult at mid-term mission (project consultation team). Therefore, as the EPI activities were consisted from three items of (1) vaccination, (2) cold chain development, and (3) enhancement of surveillance system, the accomplishment was measured not by the original purpose but by narrowing down actual activities. It was evaluated that the basic techniques based on the WHO standards were transferred to the counterparts.

(3) Efficiency

The inputs from the Japanese side and training of the counterparts were appropriately implemented as scheduled. The Mongolian side had provided facilities and assigned counterparts to implement the project. However, for the latter part of the project, the long-term experts were not dispatched from the Japanese side, and the activities by the short-term experts were also not implemented continuously. The human resources from the Mongolian side were limited and the counterparts had other tasks for other international institutions so their activities were limited. However, the budget, equipment and the personnel allocated for the project were efficiently utilized for the activities, which led to a certain result.

(4) Impact

The overall goal; to promote maternal and child health in Mongolia, is somehow related with the effects that EPI gave to maternal and child health care, but it will take a long time for the effects to be realized. As for other positive impacts, the evaluation study identified the followings: the transferred techniques in the center of Mongolia expanded to local areas, and development of methods utilized by the experts at the laboratories (inspector method by hands) motivated some engineers to review their inspection methods proactively.

(5) Sustainability

As for the organizational sustainability, the Ministry of Health (MOH) and National Center for Communicable Diseases (NCCD) developed an organizational system and cooperation system as the health care administrative agency and an implementing organization with expertise respectively. Under the project, cold chain and diagnosis laboratory were established, and the information, education and communication (IEC) activities on EPI led to a high vaccination rate, over 95%. Quality of surveillance still needs some improvements in terms of its accuracy, and the percentage of expenditure by the Mongolian government is very low and depends on financial aid provided by the aid organizations. However, a vaccination fund was established under the New Vaccination Law enacted in 2001. Therefore, it is evaluated that the high vaccination rate can be maintained as long as the vaccine is supplied continuously.
[IDD]

(1) Relevance

The project is the same as EPI, in line with the "National Action Plan for Development of Children in Mongolia" settled by the government of Mongolia. Based on the results of a national survey on goiter in 1992 conducted by the government with the assistance of U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), it became clear that there was an urgent need to take countermeasures to IDD such as dissemination of iodized salt. The relevance of the project to the needs was high.

(2) Effectiveness

The disease rate of goiter was lowered from the 40% level to the 20% level nationally. The dissemination project on iodized salt was developed for the parents, teachers and students, and the recognition rate of the salt reached to be 95%. The dissemination rate of iodized salt in urban areas was improved to 80%. However, in rural areas, people recognized the importance of ionized salt but could not buy them because of financial difficulties, and so the dissemination rate was still low. Therefore, as for the original project purpose at national level it was difficult, but in the target area where activities were implemented the expected effects was obtained, which indicated that the accomplishment rate was high. In the meantime, the

change of jurisdiction on the iodized salt industry from MOH to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and the change of counterparts resulting from the change of government in the middle of the project interfered with the activities and lowered the accomplishment rate of the project purpose.

(3) Efficiency

Generally, the inputs from the Japanese side were appropriately implemented. Similarly, the Mongolian side provided a certain levels of input, but because the counterparts hold the post of the counterpart with the other donors concurrently, there was a time restraint for them to cope with the project activities. In addition, there was financial difficulty as well as the ripple effects of the change of government, which resulted in the hampering of project implementation such as insufficient maintenance of the facilities. However, the allocated budget, equipment and personnel were efficiently utilized for the activities, which led to a certain result.

(4) Impact

The overall goal; to promote maternal and child health in Mongolia, is somehow related with the effects that IDD Elimination Program gave to maternal and child health care, but it will take a long time for the effects to be realized. As for some positive impacts, development of the methods utilized by the experts at laboratories (inspector method by hands) motivated some engineers to review their inspection methods proactively. On the other hand, there were also some negative effects observed such as cheaper iodized salt was imported from neighboring countries including Russia, and the domestic production of the salt was limited.

(5) Sustainability

As for organizational aspects, the Ministry of Health (MOH) and National Center for Communicable Diseases (NCCD) developed an organizational system and cooperation system as the health care administrative agency and an implementing organization respectively. However, as the population of Mongolia is small, it is extremely difficult to assure the human resources. As for the financial aspect, as the government of Mongolia is constantly short of funds, the country tends to rely on aid from other donors. However, the IDD Elimination Program itself does not require huge amounts of money, so there would be no huge financial problem if activities are continuously implemented in an appropriate scale. The counterparts have acquired the techniques of analysis and inspection methods and become able to implement accurate inspection and diagnosis by themselves, therefore, a reliable monitoring system has been established to some degree. However as there will be no problem in following the existing methods, the counterparts have not reached the level to develop new ideas proactively and to conduct IEC activities, planning, implementation and evaluation.

3-2 Factors that promoted realization of effects

(1) Factors Concerning the Planning

N/A.

(2) Factors concerning the Implementation Process

1) The project did not introduce existing inspection methods which were expensive by experts, but introduced sustainable methods in a flexible manner in Mongolia. It was possible to carry out the project activities efficiently, because the adjustment with other international institutions with different systems was made successfully and avoided the overlap with the activities conducted by other institutions.
2) The project was the first trial to make the MOHSW the counterpart organization and was promoted in harmony with related organizations, which made it possible to implement the activities in rural areas.

3-3 Factors that impeded realization of effects

(1) Factors Concerning the Planning

Appropriate correction was not made during the project although the project purpose was too ambitious at the planning stage. It was necessary to set the target of the project at a realizable level and to set the purposes more specifically. As the EPI and IDD were put into one project, the long-term experts had to cover the areas which they were not specialized in, which restricted the actual activities of the project.

(2) Factors concerning the Implementation Process

As the counterparts also worked for other organizations as counterparts, they could not give enough time, and so technical transfer was difficult. The change of counterparts caused by the change of government meant that the counterparts who took over the former counterparts had to start working on the activities without enough understanding about the project-type technical

cooperation. Therefore, they were dependent on the Japanese experts, and the Japanese experts had to implement those activities which were supposed to be taken care of by the Mongolian side.

3-4 Conclusion

[EPI]
It was not enough just to try to increase the vaccination rate at some districts only, but it was necessary to continuously try to raise the vaccination rate in wide areas. Therefore, it was difficult to implement narrowed down activities within the project framework, and the effects could not be evaluated highly even though the activities was very well conducted. Fundamentally, it is not possible that the budget of the Mongolian government could cover the EPI activities, and it is difficult for the project to be continued with sustainability by the Mongolian side.
[IDD]
In huge areas with weak fundamental development, the five-year cooperation period was too short for national development of the IDD Elimination Program; therefore, the project activities should be developed by narrowing down the target. However, the contents of the activities implemented was not so complicated compared with the EPI, therefore, the project has a higher possibility to be continued by the Mongolian side with sustainability.

3-5 Recommendations

(1) As for EPI, it is necessary for MOHSW to establish a vaccine fund or to collaborate with international aid organizations to continuously assure vaccine provision. It is also necessary to assure financial resources to establish a maintenance and management system for the cold chain.

As the commencement of the instructor's retraining course was delayed more than planned, it is necessary to plan, develop and implement the course again.

(2) It is necessary to enhance the management section by the personnel who are in charge of the nutrition program at MOH to grasp all the activities of IDD Elimination Program. It is also an urgent task that the government of Mongolia assures sufficient budget to implement the IDD activities continuously after the termination of the project.

3-6 Lessons Learned

(1) To prevent divergence between purpose and activities, from the planning stage, it is necessary to strive to set an attainable target and to recruit and assure the staff (experts and counterparts) as planned.

(2) Counterparts might have financial difficulties and shortage of human resources; therefore, it is necessary to develop a feasible plan that considers the actual condition of the country.

(3) It is sometimes necessary to implement a drastic reform at the mid-evaluation because the change at the mid-evaluation may have strong impacts on the final results.

3-7 Follow-up Situation

N/A.