

Summary

1. Outline of the Project

Country: Republic of Paraguay

Project Title: The Project for Strengthening Continuing Education in Nursing and Midwifery in the South of the Republic of Paraguay

Issue/Sector: Healthcare and medical care

Cooperation Scheme: Technical Assistance Project

Division in Charge: Human Development Department, JICA

Total cost (as of the time of evaluation): Approximately 570 million Japanese yen

Period of Cooperation (Duration):

February 20, 2001-February 19, 2006

Partner Country's Implementing Organization: Ministry of Public Health and Welfare

Supporting Organization in Japan: Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, International Medical Center of Japan, St. Mary's Hospital, Tenshi College

1-1 Background of the Project

This project was initiated on February 20, 2001 for the purpose of strengthening and improving the capacity of human resources engaged in maternal and pediatric health services in the southern region of the Republic of Paraguay (hereinafter referred to as "Paraguay"), where national healthcare services have been relatively underdeveloped. Although the project initially targeted three southern provinces, namely Misiones, Neembucu and Itapua, the plan was changed in May 2002 to concentrate in two provinces with the exclusion of Itapua, due to the stagnation of activities therein. The project activities showed smooth progress thereafter. As a result, following a visit by the Project Consultation team from Japan, agreement was reached in regards to a subsequent amendment to the project design matrix (PDM3.1) upon the Mid-term Evaluation conducted in September 2004, and new targeted regions (Itapua and Caazapa) and outputs (Output 3 and Output 4) were added. Because it took about five months for the project to be completed, this terminal evaluation was conducted for the purpose of confirming the performance and the achievement of project outputs and making a final evaluation of the project based on the five criteria of evaluation, on the basis of the two past changes to the project's design.

1-2 Project Overview

(1) Overall Goal

To improve the healthcare services provided by nursing and midwifery personnel in Paraguay on a national level

(2) Project Purpose

To establish and manage the continuing education system for maternal and pediatric health in the southern provinces (Neembucu, Misiones, Itapua and Caazapa) for human resources engaged in nursing and midwifery

(3) Project Outputs

1) To establish and conduct continuing education training model for human resources engaged in nursing and midwifery in the pilot region

2) To establish and conduct criteria for monitoring continuing educational training for human resources engaged in nursing and midwifery in the pilot region

3) To formulate an official certification framework for nursing and midwifery personnel (vocational nurses, vocational midwives, nursing technicians, midwifery technicians)

4) To institutionalize continuing education for human resources engaged in nursing and midwifery at all levels

(4) Activities of the Project

1-1 To conduct preparation for training programs

1-1-1 To create a training program suitable for conditions in the pilot region

1-1-2 To foster the training of facilitators (instructors)

1-1-3 To modify educational materials as needed in accordance with conditions in the pilot region

1-2 To implement training programs in the pilot region

2-1 To create criteria for the monitoring of training

2-2 To implement the monitoring of training

2-3 To summarize monitoring results

2-4 To modify the continuing education curriculum as needed, based on the findings of the monitoring process

3-1 To organize a committee charged with deliberating on the composition of an official certification system for nursing and midwifery personnel

3-2 To formulate a framework for official certification program for nursing and midwifery personnel

3-2-1 To consider the required levels (level for entry into continuing education) for specific nursing and midwifery vocations

3-2-2 To consider and determine the details of official certification

3-2-3 To consider and determine the method of certification

3-2-4 To formulate a registration system for certified personnel

4-1 To formulate curriculum for continuing education system for human resources engaged in nursing and midwifery at all levels

4-1-1 To organize a committee charged with deliberating on curriculum for continuing education in the fields of nursing and midwifery

4-1-2 To establish a committee charged with implementing and evaluating curriculum for continuing education in the fields of nursing and midwifery

4-1-3 To consider and determine curriculum for continuing education system for vocational nurses in the above-mentioned two committees

4-2 To summarize the results of trials in the pilot region and modify the contents as needed

4-3 To seek Ministry of Public Health and Welfare approval of the institutionalization of continuing education for vocational nurses

4-4 To secure adequate budgetary resources for the implementation of the training programs in the pilot region

(5) Project Inputs

1) Japanese side:

Long-term experts 10 persons (278M/M)

Short-term experts 8 persons (11M/M)

Third-country experts 3 persons (9.5M/M)

No. of trainees received in Japan 16 persons

Equipment supply Approx. 97.29 million yen

Local cost Approx. 77.8 million yen (including costs for the third-country experts)

2) Paraguayan Side:

Local cost Approx. 13.89 million yen (including personnel costs)

2. Evaluation Team Overview

Members of the evaluation team

(Area in charge: name, title)

Leader:

Akira Hashizume

Executive Technical Advisor, Human Development Department, JICA

Nursing education:

Keiko Tajima

Former Vice President, Hiroshima Prefectural College of Health Sciences

Cooperation planning:

Kazue Minami

Healthcare Human Resource Development Team, Group III, Human Development
Department, JICA

Analysis and evaluation:

Keiko Kita

Global Link Management

3. Overview of Evaluation Results

3-1 Achievements

(1) Project Purpose Achievements

The Project Purpose, namely the establishment and management of the continuing education system for maternal and pediatric health in the southern provinces for human resources engaged in nursing and midwifery, is achieved overall as of the terminal evaluation.

(2) Output Achievements

Continuing training and monitoring activities in the four southern provinces has already been completed. Because the training program (documents, educational materials, tools and equipment outlining the framework of the program) and monitoring criteria have already been approved by the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare, it can be assessed that Outputs 1 and 2 have been achieved. Since the submission of the report on the framework for the official certification system for nursing and midwifery personnel is scheduled for before the end of 2005, Output 3 is expected to be achieved. As for Output 4, due to changes in the target subject for curriculum creation from vocational nurse to nursing technician and midwifery technician after 2005, the creation of continuing education curriculum targeted at vocational nurses had not yet been completed as of the time of evaluation, and is not expected to reach completion by the end of the project. This curriculum is scheduled for implementation through the activities of committees under the initiative of the technical counterparts of the Central Government upon the completion of the project.

(3) Implementation Process

In the early stage of the project, the project progress lagged due to reasons such as the lack of appointment of central government technical counterparts, the lack of

contributions made for local costs, an inadequate project office and personnel replacement on both the Japanese and Paraguayan sides. In order to cope with delays in the project's progress, the extent of the targeted region was reduced from three provinces (Misiones, Neembucu and Itapua) to two (with the omission of Itapua). At the same time, activities and outputs were adjusted slightly. Following the operational guidance given in 2002, some of the experts from the project team on the Japanese side were transferred to local regions. An increase in the number of personnel on the Japanese expert team and active personnel contribution from Paraguay resulted in the maintenance of a stable project operation system. Thus, Caazapa and Itapua Provinces were added in the project on the occasion of the Mid-term Evaluation conducted in September 2004, with a view to increasing the extent of the targeted region four provinces in total. The project was implemented smoothly as planned following the Mid-term Evaluation.

3-2 Summary of Evaluation Results

(1) Relevance

It is considered that the relevance of the project is high. This project is conducive to issues such as “increasing the extent of the region covered by the services,” “improvement of reproductive health,” “improvement of pediatric health” and “decentralization of local services” in the area of healthcare and medical care, as outlined in the National Development Plan (2003-2008) of Paraguay. In addition, consistency with the project is found in terms of “decrease in the incidence and mortality rate of mothers and children,” “strengthening of healthcare and medical care services in rural areas,” and “improvement of healthcare services” among other goals set out in the National Healthcare Policy . Furthermore, this project, by promoting the provision of maternal and pediatric healthcare services in the southern region of the country, which is regarded as a deprived area (including Neembucu Province, which has been outside the scope of other aid agencies in the past while being most in need), is also consistent with the aid policy of Japan and also fulfills the needs of the local communities involved.

(2) Effectiveness

It is expected that the Project Purpose, “to establish and manage the continuing education system on maternal and pediatric health in the southern provinces (four provinces) for human resources engaged in nursing and midwifery” will

be achieved overall by the end of the project. Components of the system include: (i) a certification system approved by the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare (Output 3) and a continuing education system (Output 4), and (ii) a training implementation cycle model for the continuing education training program [training model (Output 1) and training monitoring criteria (Output 2)]. Therefore, it is considered that the “system is established” when all the four outputs have been achieved. As of the time of evaluation, it is expected that all outputs other than Output 4 will be achieved by the end of 2005. As for Output 4, although progress is lagging behind due to the fact that the target nursing and midwifery personnel for the curriculum was shifted from vocational nurses to nursing and midwifery technicians, further efforts is made in the project for early achievement of this output. It is of great significance that this represents the first ever basis for a system of continuing education in Paraguay.

(3) Efficiency

It is considered that the project has been efficiently implemented overall. In addition to the fact that smooth progress of the project was confirmed at the time of the interim survey, the targeted region was expanded from two provinces to four. However, in order to reduce the implementation cost for the additional two provinces, the implementation system, educational materials and methods established through the implementation of training programs in the other two provinces were employed. In addition, the sustainability of the project was promoted by way of increasing the level of contribution on the Paraguayan side (including human resource contributions) for the first two provinces while seeking to avoid an excessive increase in input from the Japanese side due to the expansion of targeted region. The dispatching of Japanese experts, training in Japan and the assignment of human resources from the Paraguayan side were implemented efficiently. As for the machinery and equipment provided, although some arrived later than was planned, machinery and equipment has for the most part been utilized efficiently. While some problems remain in terms of the state of utilization of machinery and equipment, such devices are slated for utilization in hospitals.

(4) Impact

It is considered that this project has had a significant impact. The numbers of family planning counseling sessions, gynecological checkups, checkups for infants and other healthcare services provided by way of home visits are all increasing. In addition, it has been confirmed that there are facilities in each province wherein the number of

users has increased for reasons such as enhanced motivation among nursing and midwifery personnel who participated in the training program or their development of warm attitudes towards patients. Furthermore, the project's activities have provided momentum for various activities at the national level (including curriculum reviews and the establishment of a committee for continuing education for healthcare and medical service personnel) and towards the creation of an international information network on continuing education in Latin America and the Caribbean region.

(5) Sustainability

Although it is expected that political support aimed at sustaining the project will continue, prospects are not so bright in terms of financial support. The National Center for Continuing Education in Nursing and Midwifery was officially approved in July 2005 as a "Bureau" directly under the Vice Minister of Public Health and Welfare and it is currently applying for budgetary support for FY2006. However, considering the government's financial situation, it will be difficult for the sought-after budget to gain full approval. Therefore, the project team is considering securing the cost for the training program through collaboration with Asociación Paraguaya de Enfermería (APE, Paraguayan Nurses Association). As for the implementation ability of parties involved in the project (technical counterparts of the Central Government, coordinators in the targeted provinces, training facilitators in the targeted provinces), it is considered that all of them have acquired the ability to implement the necessary activities on their own upon the completion of the project. The shift of ownership to the project participants on the Paraguayan side will be an issue to be address in the future.

3-3 Factors Contributing in the Production of Effects

(1) Planning

Although the Project Purpose is to improve the state of healthcare and medical services in the southern provinces, the focus on the achievement of the Overall Goal, "to improve healthcare services provided by nursing and midwifery personnel in Paraguay on the national level," was emphasized with the addition of Outputs 3 and 4, which require the presence of national-level activities as project components, in PDM3.1 that had been amended on the occasion of the interim survey.

(2) Implementation Process

- National Center for Continuing Education on Nursing and Midwifery was officially

approved in FY 2004 as the Bureau for Continuing Education on Nursing and Midwifery directly under the Vice Minister of Public Health and Welfare, and became able to apply for individual budgetary concessions.

- All parties on the Paraguayan side participated vigorously in the project, taking the trouble to commit to overtime work, and they showed a strong willingness to work towards improvement.
- The technical counterparts within the central government were adequately selected in terms of their knowledge and skills.
- The project coordinators in each province willingly participated in the activities.
- The National Institute of Health provided help with the establishment of the official certification system.

3-4 Problems and Factors that Raised Problems

(1) Planning

The fact that the PDM prepared at the start of the project (PDM1) did not set out detailed plans such as indexes, methods for obtaining indexes and external conditions had a significant effect on the progress of the project.

(2) Implementation Process

- There was a reshuffle of the personnel involved in the project.
- The central government technical counterparts and the training facilitators in each province have duties other than the tasks needed for this project.
- There were occasions wherein certain organizations for which training participants worked did not show full understanding of the fact that their nursing and midwifery personnel were to participate in the training, and did not fully cooperate with the project.
- Due to insufficient transportation infrastructure, there were travel difficulties in regards to training participation and conducting monitoring.
- The Paraguayan side had not been securing budgetary concessions for the implementation of the training program.
- The Paraguayan side had not been securing budgetary concessions for training and monitoring.

3-5 Conclusion

This project began with the purpose of improving the maternal and pediatric

healthcare services provided by nursing and midwifery personnel in the southern provinces. However, in the interim survey conducted in September 2004, outputs with components extending beyond the scope of the southern provinces (with the formulation of a certification system framework and the institutionalization of continuing education) were added to the outputs whose components were limited to activities in the southern provinces (the establishment and implementation of a continuing education training model and the establishment and implementation of monitoring criteria for continuing education training), in order to provide the necessary basic conditions for the establishment of a system for continuing education. Most of these scheduled activities had already been implemented at the time of this terminal evaluation, and some that remained unfinished at the time of the evaluation are for the most part expected to have reached their conclusion by the end of the project, so it is expected that all output will be more or less achieved. Therefore, it is probable that the Project Purpose, namely the “establishment and management of the system of continuing education for maternal and pediatric health care in the southern (four) provinces for human resources engaged in nursing and midwifery,” derived from these outputs will also have been achieved. Although activities pertaining to the institutionalization of continuing education for vocational nurses and vocational midwives will not have been completed by the end of the project, continuing education for vocational nurses and midwives has been implemented in the four southern provinces, and as such the achievement of the project purpose will not be hindered. It is considered that the relevance and efficiency of the project is high and its impact is significant. Securing financial sources will be a future issue to be addressed.

3-6 Recommendations (Specific Measures, Recommendations and Advice in Relation to this Project)

- The Ministry of Public Health and Welfare should familiarize the heads of healthcare and medical facilities with the significance of the participation of nursing and midwifery personnel in the training program and encourage them to cooperate with the participation of said personnel in the training sessions.
- Parties involved in the project should consider means for the continuous effective utilization of the National Center for Continuing Education on Nursing and Midwifery even after the completion of the project for the purpose of disseminating continuing education for nursing and midwifery personnel in Paraguay.
- Parties involved in the project should consider continuous measures to support

activities on behalf of nursing and midwifery personnel who have already participated in the training program.

- Parties involved in the project should continue to make efforts to secure financial resources for the implementation of training and monitoring.

3-7 Lessons Learned (Matters Helpful for Determining/Planning Similar Projects Derived from this Project and the Implementation, Operation and Administration Thereof)

- Although this is a project aimed at improving the state of healthcare and medical service in the southern provinces, the addition of outputs requiring national-level activities as project components paved the way to the achievement of nationwide application of the project (activity model).

- The project was effective in terms of qualitative development of operational quality as a result of the fact that through its primary focus on the creation of an operational management system, monitoring was selected as one of its outputs.

- The effects of the dissemination of the training were enhanced as a result of the method in which nursing and midwifery personnel, the direct target of the project, were fostered, wherein Japanese experts first fostered facilitators, and such facilitators prepared programs corresponding to important needs in accordance with conditions in specific regions, prior to the implementation of training and monitoring for nursing and midwifery personnel.

- The development of educational materials for training by the nursing and midwifery personnel who participated in the training program was an effective means of maintaining the effects of the training, so as to permit the continued use of said training methodology in the former participants' workplaces.

- The fact that the training program (including documents outlining the framework of the program, educational materials, educational tools and equipments) was officially approved by the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare was effective in ensuring the utilization and dissemination thereof.

- Training in Japan was conducive to the creation of a concrete image of continuing education and raising awareness among the participants of problems relating to the nursing profession.

- The appointment of a nurses as project managers was effective in establishing a system wherein problems related to nursing and midwifery were addressed proactively.

- Because the use of equipment and machinery rarely used in actual workplaces for

training purposes poses difficulties, it is desirable to reflect on the details of the training and equipment used therein based on a prior understanding of the actual working environments, in order to provide training that can be used beyond the duration of the training program.