

Country Name	Strengthening of the Primary Health Care in the Province of Samana
Dominican Republic	

I. Project Outline

Background	<p>In the Dominican Republic, under the principle of “giving all citizens equal access to healthcare services”, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (SESPAS) was playing a central role in carrying out reforms to improve healthcare services especially for low-income citizens and those in less developed regions as well as providing free medical care through national medical institutions. In 2001, General Health Law and Social Security System Law were promulgated as the basis of such reforms. One of the objectives of these laws was to improve primary healthcare services, giving priority to promotion of health and prevention of diseases under the scheme of decentralization. However, as a result of long-time centralization, provincial health offices (DPSs) and regional healthcare units (UNAPs) lacked the ability of organizational operation. Regional healthcare organizations were not well-established, reflecting the past trend of giving priority to treatment, and healthcare workers needed to change their mentality and improve their knowledge and skills for the achievement of the new healthcare system. Under these circumstances, it was especially imperative to reinforce regional organizations and personnel.</p>										
Objectives of the Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Goal: To provide high-quality preventive care services to the users by the regional healthcare units (UNAPs) through primary healthcare reinforcement activities. Project Purpose: To establish a practical model¹ for regional healthcare that provides high-quality healthcare services to the residents (especially pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants) through UNAPs in Samana Province. Assumed steps for achieving the project goals²: This project aims to enhance i) UNAP's capacity in preventive healthcare and health promotion services, and ii) DPS's capacity in supervision and instructions for UNAPs, then establish a practical model of regional healthcare between DPS and UNAPs, and thereby provide high-quality preventive care services by UNAPs both in Samana and other provinces for nation-wide dissemination of the model. 										
Activities of the project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project site: Samana Province Main activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce integrated services of mothers and infants healthcare to UNAPs - Strengthen coordination between UNAPs and hospitals - Conduct community diagnosis by family registration - Strengthen the functions of health committees, UNAPs to promote participation in local activities by community - Monitor UNAP functions by DPS Inputs (to carry out above activities) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Japanese Side</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Dominican Republic Side</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1) Experts: 6 persons</td> <td>1. Staff allocated: 25 persons</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) Trainees received: 7 persons</td> <td>2. Land and facilities: office space in SESPAS and DPS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) Equipment: thermometers, sphygmomanometer, etc.</td> <td>3. Local cost 9 million RD\$ (items not specified)</td> </tr> </table> 			Japanese Side	Dominican Republic Side	1) Experts: 6 persons	1. Staff allocated: 25 persons	2) Trainees received: 7 persons	2. Land and facilities: office space in SESPAS and DPS	3) Equipment: thermometers, sphygmomanometer, etc.	3. Local cost 9 million RD\$ (items not specified)
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Project Period	October 2004 - October 2009	Project Cost	Total: 377 million yen								
Implementing Agency	Secretariat of State for Public Health and Social Welfare (SESPAS) Samana Provincial Health Office (DPS)										
Cooperation Agency in Japan	IC Net Limited										
Related Projects	<p>Japan's cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Project for the Expansion of Immunization Program (Grant Aid through UNICEF) -Dispatch of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) (Team of nurses, midwives and public health nurses, Rural Community Development Officers and Film Production (2003-present)) -The Project for Strengthening Primary Health Care for Pregnant Women and Newborns in Health Region III (Technical Cooperation, March 2013 – February 2017) <p>Other donors' cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fondo de Atencion Primaria: FONAP (World Bank and IDB, -2004), Programa de Reforzamiento de Sistema de Salud: PROSISA (EU, -2005) 										

II. Result of the Evaluation

1 Relevance

This project has been highly relevant with Dominican Republic's development policy (improvement of primary care and reduction of maternal and child mortality as set in “the General Law of Health”, “the Social Security Law” as well as “the

¹ The “practical model” consists of a series of activities such as i) introduction of a reproductive health training system for assistant nurses, ii) introduction of reproductive health handbooks, iii) introduction of an appointment book and card system for checkups, iv) diagnoses of regions through family registration and enhancement of cooperation system

² Reviewed at the time of the ex-post evaluation.

Ten-Year Plan 2006-2015”, and development needs “enhancement of primary care services that are provided by the UNAPs”, and as well as Japan’s ODA policy “JICA Country Assistance Programme (2002)”, which specifies “the health improvement of rural poverty population” at the time of both ex-ante evaluation and project completion. Therefore, relevance of this project is high.

2 Effectiveness/Impact

This project has largely achieved the project purpose “establishment of a practical model for high-quality healthcare services by UNAPs” through i) improvement of preventive healthcare and health promotion service of UNAPs in Samana Province and ii) supervision and instructions for UNAPs by DPS. Regarding i), tools such as the vaccination card, the family record sheet and the reference and counter-reference sheet were introduced. Before the project implementation, UNAPs had no tools to monitor the situations of mothers and children and therefore could not actively ask them to visit UNAPs regularly. These tools introduced by this project have established and strengthened the linkage between UNAPs and families. As a result, unnecessary visit to hospitals decreased, and visits to UNAPs increased³. As for ii), the monitoring and supervision system of UNAPs by DPS was introduced. Monitoring and supervision includes such items as conditions of buildings, allocation of health care staff, electricity, water supply, sewage, etc. and the results are used to improve the conditions of UNAPs. According to some UNAPs in Samana Province, better allocation and management of health care staff, better hygienic level, etc have been attained. While there is not an official document that explicitly approves the outputs of this project as a model, the Ministry of Health has taken it as a basis for the preparation of guidelines and manuals of primary health care. In 2008, Samana was declared as a model province of the primary health care by the Ministry and it has been the reference in the health sector. At the time of ex-post evaluation, most of those tools and monitoring system are still continuously applied in Samana and have been extended to other UNAPs in neighboring provinces that observed the effects of the project. This led to the certain degree of achievement of the overall goal “provision of high-quality preventive care services by UNAPs” since the maternal mortality ratio shows declining trend in Samana. The infant mortality rate has also been declining with the exception of 2012 and is lower than the national average 32 per 1,000 live births (2012).



A doctor of UNAP with maternal child health handbook



Board game for health promotion

Therefore, effectiveness/impact of this project is high.

Achievement of project purpose and overall goal

Aim	Indicators	Results																									
(Project Purpose) Establishment of a practical model for high-quality healthcare services by UNAPs	A practical model for regional healthcare services established through project activities has been approved by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare by the end of the project.	(Project Completion) This project had dramatically improved the primary healthcare services in the region through development and introduction of the “Samana model”. (Ex-post Evaluation) While there is not an official document that explicitly approves the outputs of this project as a model, the Ministry of Health has taken it as a basis for the preparation of guidelines and manuals of primary health care.																									
	The rate of unnecessary visits to hospital decreases from 28% to 14% by the end of the project.	(Project completion) According to a survey conducted by the project, the rate of unnecessary visits to hospital decreased from 28% in 2003 to 10% in 2008. (Ex-post Evaluation) There is no system for measuring the unnecessary visits to the hospital after the project. However, the number of pregnant and postpartum women who visit UNAPs is larger than those who visit hospitals.																									
(Overall goal) Provision of high-quality preventive care services by UNAPs	The maternal and infant mortality is reduced. Note: The statistics are specifically for Samana.	(Ex-post Evaluation)																									
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Source: DPS, Project Completion Report, Interview results

3 Efficiency

The inputs were appropriate for producing the outputs of the project. While the project period the project period was as planned (ratio against the plan: 100%), and the project cost slightly exceeded the plan (ratio against the plan: 123%). Therefore, efficiency of this project is fair.

³ At the time of ex-post evaluation, no system exists to clearly measure the unnecessary visits to the hospital.

4 Sustainability

Regarding the policy aspect, high-quality preventive care services by UNAPs is considered as one of the most important health issues and therefore the aim of this project is politically supported. Besides the policies and strategies mentioned in "Relevance", "the National Strategic Plan for the reduction of Maternal and Child Mortality 2012-2016" was established in 2012 to improve the coverage and quality of reproductive health at all levels of care, through the strengthening of the role of the DPS. For the institutional aspect, DPS is responsible for supervising/monitoring provincial level health care, which is dealt by secondary health institutions and primary health institutions (UNAPs). UNAPs conduct medical examination before and after childbirth as well as care for newborns. The part of functions of DPS (training of health personnel) is in the process of transferring to Ministry's regional office (SRS), which is mainly in charge of the allocation and maintenance of human resources and equipment required for the implementation of healthcare programs, but separation of roles is not clearly determined at the time of ex-post evaluation. There are currently capable personnel at provincial/local level and there is no problem in the current operations, although the allocation of medical staff at 12 UNAPs in Samana Province does not fulfill the General Health Law. Health Committees have been playing a major role in the enhancement of UNAP activities and residents' health consciousness has been raised. They have also contributed to the improvement of sewerage, disposal of garbage, reduction of harmful insects and so forth. As for technical aspect, according to Samana DPS staff, they have sufficient skills and knowledge to conduct proper primary healthcare and are transferring such skills and knowledge acquired through the project to relevant personnel at DPS and UNAPs both in Samana province and other provinces without problems. In addition, the technical level of UNAPs is maintained as described in "Effectiveness/Impact". Most of equipment provided by the project, such as thermometers, sphygmomanometer, are properly working/maintained and in good shape. Thus, at the time of ex-post evaluation, no problem has been observed in policy background, technical aspect and institutional aspect of the implementing agencies. Regarding the financial aspect, one of the main budgetary items necessary to maintain the project effects is that for supervision and the instructions for UNAPs. Such budget has been allocated to the Ministry of Health, the DPS and the SRS for the last three years. However, there is no budget allocated for the extension of the Samana model to UNAPs that were not the target of the project, with the exception of budget to extend some tools developed by the project. Due to insufficient budget at the local level, some UNAPs have discontinued the reproduction of some tools, such as maternal child health handbook. Therefore, the project has some problems in terms of financial aspect of the implementing agency. Therefore, sustainability of effects of this project is fair.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The project has largely achieved the improvement of preventive healthcare and health promotion service of UNAPs in Samana Province with supervision and instructions by DPS for the project purpose of "establishment of a practical model for high-quality healthcare services by UNAPs". With the establishment and extension of the tools and mechanism that the project introduced (now called "the Samana model"), the overall goal "provision of high-quality preventive care services by UNAPs" has been achieved and the maternal and infant mortality rates have been declining in Samana.

As for sustainability, there was no problem observed in the policy and technical aspects; however, some problems are observed in terms of institutional and financial aspects of the implementing agency because of shortage of medical staff at UNAPs and lack of budget for the extension of the Samana model to UNAPs that were not the target of the project.

For efficiency, the inputs were appropriate for producing the outputs of the project, though the project cost slightly exceeded the plan.

In the light of above, this project is evaluated to be satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations for Implementing agency:

- The Ministry of Health is recommended to continue to utilize the trained people under the project in order to disseminate the model to other provinces.
- It is recommended to clarify the functions of the DPS and the SRS and foster better coordination between them, so that the results of the monitoring of UNAPs can be effectively reflected for better operations/services of UNAPs as well as for empowerment of personnel dealing with health issues.

Lessons learned for JICA

- The baseline study before implementing a project is essential in order to evaluate the Effectiveness/Impact of projects. In the case of this project, a baseline study was conducted but it did not collect the necessary data on the primary health care to measure the Effectiveness.
- As mentioned in Effectiveness/Impact, most of the tools (documents) have been extended to UNAPs in neighboring provinces. However, if these tools had been prepared from the beginning of the project in cooperation with the central level, they might have been approved more promptly and good practices using such tools might have been extended more broadly and rapidly.