

Country Name	Project for Sustainable Development of Human Resources for Health to Improve Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Services
Lao People's Democratic Republic	

I. Project Outline

Background	<p>In Lao P.D.R., despite a considerable progress in improving the health of its population, the maternal mortality rate was at 580 per 100,000 live births and the under 5 mortality rate was 61 per 1,000 live births in 2011, which were the highest among the South East Asian countries. Moreover, in 2009, the number of health workers (medical doctors, nurses and midwives with middle and high-level professional education) was 3,385 equal to 0.53 health workers per 1,000 populations, which was significantly lower than the Global Health Workforce Alliance's minimum recommended threshold of 2.3 health workers per 1,000 populations. The quality of health services was another challenge. Nursing and midwifery schools of universities and colleges in the country did not have unified curriculums, and national examinations have not been conducted. As a result, quality of health services was not standardized or equitable.</p>												
Objectives of the Project	<p>Through the development of standard systems for nursing education, strengthening of the capacities of training institutions to implement quality educational programs, and strengthening of the coordination among relevant departments and organizations to improve the educational systems, the project aimed at the reinforcement of systems to develop human resources for health in order to provide standard and quality services, thereby contributing to the development of qualified human resources for health to improve maternal, neonatal, and child health (MNCH) services.</p>												
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Goal: Qualified human resources for health are developed to improve MNCH services. Project Purpose: Systems to develop human resources for health are reinforced to provide standard and quality services based on the concept of CHIPU (Complex Hospital, Institute, Project and University)* * The concept to promote development of human resources for health through partnership among schools, hospitals, and the MOH and development partners. 												
Activities of the Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project Site: sites where the University of Health Science (UHS), Colleges of Health Science (CHSs) and Public Health Schools (PHSSs) as well as 17 teaching hospitals located in Vientiane and seven provinces of Champasak, Luang Prabang, Savannakhet, Xiangkhoang, Khammouan, Oudmxai, Salavan Main Activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> development and/or institutionalization of the standard systems for nursing education, strengthening of the capacities of training institutions to implement quality educational programs, strengthening of the good coordination among relevant departments and organizations to effectively improve the educational systems. Inputs (to carry out above activities) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Japanese Side</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Lao Side</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1) Experts: 13 persons.</td> <td>1) Staff Allocated: 6 persons</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) Trainees received in Japan: 22 persons</td> <td>2) Land and Facilities: project office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) Training in the third country: 57 persons (50 to Thailand, 1 to China, 6 to Indonesia)</td> <td>3) Local cost: cost for utility of offices (electricity, water and telephone)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4) Equipment: PCs, copiers, printers, projectors, office furniture, etc.</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> 			Japanese Side	Lao Side	1) Experts: 13 persons.	1) Staff Allocated: 6 persons	2) Trainees received in Japan: 22 persons	2) Land and Facilities: project office	3) Training in the third country: 57 persons (50 to Thailand, 1 to China, 6 to Indonesia)	3) Local cost: cost for utility of offices (electricity, water and telephone)	4) Equipment: PCs, copiers, printers, projectors, office furniture, etc.	
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Project Period	February 2012 - February 2016	Project Cost	(ex-ante) 350 million yen, (actual) 236 million yen										
Implementing Agency	Department of Health Professional Education (DHPE) and the Department of Health Care and Rehabilitation (DHR) of Ministry of Health (MOH) (Former Department of Training and Research (DTR) and Department of Health Care (DHC) of Ministry of Health (MOH) reorganized in 2019 and 2018 respectively)												
Cooperation Agency in Japan	Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, National Center for Global Health and Medicine, National College of Nursing, Japan												

II. Result of the Evaluation

1 Relevance
<p><Consistency with the Development Policy of Laos at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation></p> <p>The government of Laos formulated the "Health Personnel Development Strategy by 2020" in 2010 and the "7th National Health Sector Development Plan (NHSDP) 2011-2015" in 2011 both of which elaborated the needs of human recourse development for health through collaboration and partnership among schools, hospitals and MOH. Improvement of the quality of health services to the level of ASEAN countries by improving health system was also emphasized in the 7th NHSDP. Therefore, the project was consistent with the development policies of Laos at the time of ex-ante evaluation.</p> <p><Consistency with the Development Needs of Laos at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation></p> <p>Under the health strategy and plan stated above, the Human Resources for Health Technical Working Group (HRH-TWG) was formulated in order to enhance quantitative and qualitative capacities of training institutions for health. However, the educational functions, technical level, and management capacities of the training institutions for human resources for health were still insufficient, and operations of the programs and strategies implemented by the institutions were not exactly the kind of effective and efficient ones. Besides, in relation to</p>

preparatory arrangement for integration into ASEAN Economic Community by the end of 2015, MOH was required to develop the national licensing system. Therefore, the project was consistent with the development needs of Laos at the time of ex-ante evaluation.

<Consistency with Japan’s ODA Policy at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation>

In the “Country Assistance Program for Lao PDR” (September 2006) by the government of Japan, improvement of healthcare services (improving maternal and child health services, developing human resources and institution building related to the field of healthcare, raising the capacity for health management of local communities) was raised as one of the six priority areas of Japan’s assistance policies for Lao PDR. Therefore, the project was consistent with the Japan’s ODA policy for Laos at the time of ex-ante evaluation.

<Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, the relevance of the project is high.

2 Effectiveness/Impact

<Status of Achievement of the Project Purpose at the time of Project Completion>

The Project Purpose was achieved at the time of project completion. The management tools¹ were introduced to all the target schools of UHS, CHSs and PHSs². As for the target hospitals, although the dissemination workshop was held in Mahosot Hospital inviting the staff from other target hospitals, follow-up activities were still needed to institutionalize practical applications of the tools in the hospitals (Indicator 1). The competency-based curriculum was introduced in the CHSs and the Vientiane Nursing School in 2014 and in UHS and PHSs in 2015 (Indicator 2). The “Strategy on Health Care Professional Licensing and Registration in Lao P.D.R. 2016-2025” was submitted and approved by MOH and issued as the ministerial ordinance No. 2098 in December 2015 (Indicator 3).

<Continuation Status of Project Effects at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The project effects have been continued at the time of ex-post evaluation. The management tools have been introduced to and practically applied in all the 17 target hospitals by the end of 2016. The tools have not only been continuously utilized in the target schools and hospitals but also been further disseminated through the meetings of teachers and hospital staff and introduced in the classes of nursing management and nursing ethics. The competency-based nursing has continuously been the basis of nursing education in the target schools. The textbooks of competency-based nursing developed by the project have been the main textbooks in the schools. The national license examination has not yet started but is planned to start in December 2020. In accordance with the ministerial ordinance No. 2098, the preparation for conducting the national examination has been steadily progressing including the implementation of a pilot examination by MOH in 2019.

<Status of Achievement for Overall Goal at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The Overall Goal has not been achieved at the time of ex-post evaluation. Since the national licensing examination has not yet started at the time of ex-post evaluation but is planned to be conducted at the end of December 2020, the number of human resources for health who have licenses has not increased. The national licensing examination was planned to be conducted at the end of December 2020 because its target year was set in 2016-2020 by the “Strategy on Health Care Professional Licensing and Registration in Lao P.D.R. 2016-2025” prepared by the project.

<Other Impacts at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

According to the interviews with the Head of Nursing Division of Mahosot Hospital and the staff of some provincial hospitals, the quality of nursing documentation is the base of nursing practice, and the documentation improved by the project has reduced the work burden of nurses. No negative impact on natural, social and economic environment has been observed at the time of ex-post evaluation.

<Evaluation Result>

Therefore, the effectiveness/impact of the project is fair.

Achievement of Project Purpose and Overall Goal

Aim	Indicators	Results
Project Purpose: Systems to develop human resources for health are reinforced to provide standard and quality services based on the concept of CHIPU (Complex Hospital Institute Project University).	Indicator 1: Management tools to put “competency” and “scope of nursing practices” into practice are disseminated to all the target schools and hospitals.	Status of the Achievement: Partially achieved (continued) (Project Completion) The management tools were introduced to all the target schools of UHS, 3 CHSs and 5 PHSs. As for the target hospitals, although the dissemination workshop was held in 2015 in Mahosot Hospital inviting the staff from other 16 target hospitals, follow-up activities were still needed to institutionalize practical applications of the tools in the hospitals. (Ex-post Evaluation) The management tools have been introduced to and practically applied in all the 17 target hospitals by the end of 2016. The tools have not only been continuously utilized in the target schools and hospitals but also further disseminated through the meetings of teachers and hospital staffs and introduced in the classes of nursing management and nursing ethics in the target schools.
	Indicator 2: Competency-based nursing education is started in UHS, 3CHS, and their teaching hospitals.	Status of the Achievement: Achieved (continued) (Project Completion) The competency-based curriculum was introduced in 3 CHSs and their teaching hospitals and Vientiane Nursing School in 2014 and in UHS and 5 PHSs and their teaching hospitals in 2015. (Ex-post Evaluation) Theory and demonstrations of the competency-based nursing has been

¹ Management tools developed by the project were ordering forms, patients’ assessment sheet, nursing care sheet, checklist for nursing records, standards of nursing care, nursing care manual, supportive supervision checklist, etc.

² Target institutions were UHS, 3 CHSs, 5 PHSs, 5 central hospitals, and 12 provincial hospitals.

		continuously introduced in UHS and 3 CHSs and their teaching hospitals. The textbooks of competency-based nursing have been the main textbooks in the schools.
	Indicator 3: The framework of the national licensing system including national examination for nurses is submitted for approval.	Status of the Achievement: Achieved (continued) (Project Completion) The “Strategy on Health Care Professional Licensing and Registration in Lao P.D.R. 2016-2025” prepared by the project was submitted and approved by MOH and issued as the ministerial ordinance No.2098 in December 2015. The dissemination workshop for the strategy was held in February 2016 inviting more than 150 stakeholders from central and provincial organizations, hospitals, educational institutions, etc. (Ex-post Evaluation) The pilot examination for the national licensing examination was implemented by MOH in 2019. The first official examination is planned to be conducted in December 2020.
Overall Goal: Qualified human resources for health are developed to improve MNCH Services.	Increase of the number of human resources for health who have licenses.	(Ex-post Evaluation) Not achieved Since the national licensing examination has not yet started at the time of ex-post evaluation but is planned to be conducted at the end of December 2020, the number of human resources for health who have licenses has not increased. The national licensing examination was planned to be conducted at the end of December 2020 because its target year was set in 2016-2020 by the “Strategy on Health Care Professional Licensing and Registration in Lao P.D.R. 2016-2025” prepared by the project.

Source: Project Completion Report (2016), interviews with the managers of UHS, CHSs, PHSs, central hospitals, and provincial hospitals.

3 Efficiency

Both of the project cost and period were within the plan (ratio against the plan was 67% and 100% respectively). The outputs were produced as planned. Therefore, the efficiency of the project is high.

4 Sustainability

<Policy Aspect>

The government of Laos launched the “Health Sector Reform Strategy and Framework 2013-2025” and provided a road map to achieve a resilient health systems and universal health coverage (UHC)³. The reform framework’s priority areas include development of human resources for health along with health financing, health governance, health service delivery, and health information systems. In association with the development of human resources for health, the reform framework specifies legal and regulatory arrangements and procedures for licensing and registration of human resources for health including nurses and midwives.

<Institutional/Organizational Aspect>

In line with the “Strategy on Health Care Professional Licensing and Registration in Lao P.D.R. 2016-2025” prepared by the project, the Health Professional Council was organized in December 2017 as a secretariat office for national license examinations for nurses and midwives. Besides, DTR and DHC have been reorganized in 2019 and 2018 respectively to exercise more flexible and efficient management of health professional education and healthcare aiming at the achievement of UHC by 2025. On the other hand, according to interviews with the managers, teachers and trainers of the schools and hospitals involved in the project, the number of staff, especially high-level professional staff including teachers and instructors, has not been sufficient. For example, one teacher teaches 5 to 6 subjects to 30 to 50 students in a school, and one clinical trainer takes care of more than 20 students in a hospital. These are in excessive numbers for health education composed of considerable volume of hands-on practices.

<Technical Aspect>

Management tools developed by the project have not only been continuously used in the target schools and hospitals for their works but also introduced in the classes of nursing management, nursing ethics and other related programs. Competency-based nursing materialized by the project has been the basis of nursing education in the target schools and hospitals, and the competency-based curriculum, syllabus and textbooks prepared by the project have been continuously utilized since their authorization by MOH in 2015. According to the regulation of the Ministry of Education and Sport to update curricula every 5 years, the curricula and teaching materials prepared by the project are planned to be updated and improved in 2020 with the financial support from JICA and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The quality of nursing education in the target schools and hospitals has been maintained through the regular evaluation and guidance made by the supportive supervision introduced by the project. The supportive supervision has been managed by the nursing education committee formulated by the project composed of the teachers of UHS, CHSs and hospitals. Adding to the committee, the Healthcare Professionals Council and the Nursing Board and Midwifery established by MOH has been assisting the supportive supervision to be functional.

<Financial Aspect>

Although the budget for nursing education has been allocated by MOH, the amount of budget has not been stable and sufficient. MOH has been financially supported by a number of development partners. However, the budget for nursing education has been suppressed because a significant part of the fund goes to higher priority areas such as disease control and nutrition support.

<Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, slight problems have been observed in terms of the institutional/organizational and financial aspects of the implementing agency. Therefore, the sustainability of the effectiveness through the project is fair.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The Project Purpose was achieved by disseminating the management tools and introducing the competency-based nursing education to

³ Universal health coverage means that all people have access to the health services they need, when and where they need them, without financial hardship. (Source: WHO)

all the target schools and one of the target hospitals. The Overall Goal was not achieved because the national licensing examination for nurses and midwives has not started yet and the number of human resources for health who have licenses has not increased. As for sustainability, the institutional setup has been prepared for the national licensing examination, and the systems, tools and materials developed by the project have been continuously utilized and disseminated. However, limited human and financial resources have remained as issues. Considering all of the above points, this project is evaluated to be satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations for Implementing Agency:

- In order to achieve the Overall Goal of the project by increasing the number of nurses and midwives who have licenses, it is recommended that MOH will make sure to start the national license examination system in December 2020 as planned.
- An allocation of sufficient number of professional staff to the schools and hospitals has been continuously recommended by the terminal evaluation (2015) and the project completion report (2016). It is recommended that MOH takes whatever possible actions to increase the number of staff in order to fill the gaps in staffing.

Lessons Learned for JICA:

- The project has made significant contributions to the improvement of human resource development systems for health in Lao P.D.R. only leaving staffing shortages and financial constraints as issues for the sustainability of the project effects. Limited human and financial resources can be drawbacks to success of an ODA project particularly of sustainability of project effects. Although staffing and financing are out of the scope of a project in many cases, it is recommended that a project includes possible tactics in its plan to improve staffing and financing of the counterpart agency and to mitigate negative effects on the project by the staffing and financing issues. For that, it is strongly recommended to make a detail study on the staffing and financing situation of the counterpart agency at the initiation stage of a project. When any issues are expected to come up during the project period, it is recommended that the project finds specific countermeasures discussing with the implementing agency and execute them on the initiative of the implementing agency. Moreover, if it is necessary and possible, a support by other scheme such as a policy advisor or a technical cooperation project for governance improvement could be one of the measures to deal with the issues.
- The Overall Goal of the project aimed at “the increase of human resources who have licenses” through the implementation of a national licensing examination. However, the strategic plan prepared by the project aimed at “the implementation of a national licensing examination” as its final target. The final target (overall goal) of the project and the final target of the operational strategy of the implementing agency were thus inconsistent. Therefore, while the final operational target of the implementing agency has been achieved after the project, the overall goal of the project has not been achieved. To prevent this sort of situation takes place, it is required to explicitly state a target year of each project objective (overall goal, project purpose, output), and to carefully make related plans to be consistent with each other and with the project plan.



Midwives training in the competency-based curriculum



Competency-based curriculum