



NEWSLETTER

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**The Project for Strengthening the
the Need-Based In-Service Training
for Community Health Nurses in Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu**

Technical cooperation project between Ministries of Health in Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu and JICA

Vision to Train-Frangipani in Nursing Vanuatu, Tonga, Fiji, and Nippon (Japan)



LAUNCHING THE PROJECT "NB-IST FOR NURSES" in Vanuatu

In May 2011, "The Project for Need-Based In-Service Training (NB-IST) for Community Health Nurses" was launched in Vanuatu. The project is a three-year technical cooperation project based on the Record of Discussions (R/D) concluded in May 2010 between the government of Vanuatu and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). It will be continued until April 2014.

Vanuatu, such an archipelago country, it is extremely difficult to access those remote small islands rather than Fiji islands where the NB-IST model was developed. Nurses working at remote areas hardly receive supervision or training over the years. They are straggling to deal with health problems alone without any supports. As results, quality of health care services may reduce, the nurse may lose his or her confidence and motivation to continue working, and subsequently resign. The project focuses on these gaps and aims to establish a feasible mechanism of "Supervision and Coaching (S&C)" for community health nurses in pilot area, namely Shefa province. At the same time, the project will support to establish a national system of S&C.

MESSAGE FROM PROJECT DIRECTOR



Mr. Mark Bebe
Director General of Health

I would like to express my appreciation to people of Japan and Japanese government for the assistance. In Vanuatu, it is very serious problem that the nursing supervision to remote area is not working well in current situation due to lack of time, transportation, and management skills.

Through the project, we are going to deal with these underlying problems by establishing a systematic mechanism. With this purpose, inter-organizational cooperation among MOH, PHOs (provincial health offices), and Donors is also important in order to maximize opportunities and resources.

Impact Study in Fiji

In order to examine effective approaches and the impacts of interventions, the baseline survey has been conducted in Fiji. The purpose of the survey is to collect baseline data on the situations of the IST for nurses, and nurses' level of satisfaction and needs. In addition, as the following section explains, an impact study of the previous project implemented in Central division of Fiji from 2005 to 2008 ("Project for In-Service Training of Community Health Nurses in Fiji") has been simultaneously conducted.



Before implementing the survey, a working group was formed to advise on the survey design and monitor the process. The survey results were also shared and discussed in the working group for recognizing existing problems on NB-IST and planning project activities.

Sub-contractor has been employed for the implementation of the survey. The overview of the baseline survey is described in the table below,

Table Overview of the baseline survey in Fiji

Target areas	Nationwide (Central, Eastern, Western and Northern Divisions)
Targets	Community health nurses, nursing supervisors, MOH officers, donors and local residents
Methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual Interviews with Key Informants - Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) with community health nurses - Questionnaires survey for community health nurses, nursing supervisors and local residents
Subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current situation on NB-IST (capacities of community health nurses, situation on NB-IST and S&C, training needs of community health nurses) - Satisfaction level of community health nurses, awareness including motivation, relations with nursing supervisors - Satisfaction level of nursing supervisors, awareness including motivation, relations with community health nurses - Satisfaction level of local residents toward community health services
Analysis of impacts of the previous project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recapitulative content analysis of the qualitative survey (Focus Group Interviews and Key Informant Interviews) - Comparative analysis of the questionnaire survey in and out of Central division (With-Without analysis)

Several important results are summarized as follows.

1. Competency assessment

- The assessment based on the Competency Standards (CS) has been conducted widely and regularly in the Central division, but it was not the case in other divisions. For example, 75% of the nursing supervisors interviewed assessed their supervisees' competencies in the Central division, though no supervisors did the assessment at all in the Eastern and Northern divisions.
- Nevertheless, majority of neither supervisors nor community health nurses in the Central division understood properly the objectives of the CS assessment.

2. In-service training

- Many supervisors did not think that IST programs were made available to all nurses. They also feel that the IST programs did not have adequate coverage to address the competency gaps of the nurses. Because of the lack of coordination at the national level, the programs do not necessarily match needs of each nurse.
- In the Central division, however, there was significantly larger number of supervisors answered that they thought the IST topics provided matched with nurses' needs and weakness in comparison with other divisions.

3. Impacts of the previous project

- The supervisors in the Central division have implemented the CS assessment on a regular basis, and, as a result, the training needs assessment and the planning of IST has been conducted commonly at the divisional and sub-divisional levels. However, the objectives of the CS assessment are not properly understood by both nurses and nursing supervisors. The impacts of the previous project is limited in this regard.
- One of the main reasons why the previous project made limited impacts is high turnover of nursing supervisors. Most of the supervisors trained under the previous project have to leave their workplace without any succession plan as a result of the early retirement policy of MOH. As a result, the concepts such as "Competency Standards" or "Need-Based In-Service Training" have become new for most of the nursing supervisors.

The project needs to support both nursing supervisors and community health nurses to stimulate proper understanding of S&C and CS assessment. The project also needs to accelerate the coordination within MOH and with the donors for implementing NB-IST.



Project Activities

Fiji

The second JCC meeting

The second meeting of the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) in Fiji was held on 27th June 2011 at Tanoa International Hotel, Suva.

The major agendas were as follows:

1. Progress reports on project activities by the end of 2011
2. Annual Work Plan for 2012
3. Results of the baseline survey and recommendations
4. Proposal on modification of Project Design Matrix

It was reminded the members should consider the Annual Work Plan 2012 of this project when the members prepare the budget request to be submitted in June. All the matters raised along with the agenda were authorized. Valuable suggestions were also made from attendants.



Vanuatu

The first JCC meeting

In Vanuatu, on the 9th of June, the first JCC meeting for the project was held in MOH, Port Vila. The committee is chaired by the Director General of Health, Mr. Mark Bebe, and consists of Human Resource Development Manager, Director South Health Care, Principal of Nursing School, Chairperson of Nursing Council, Shefa Health Manager, Representative of JICA Vanuatu Office, and JICA experts. Besides members, relevant parties including WHO, peace-corps, JOCV participated in the meeting as observers. The project team explained the project outlines, project modalities, and the annual activity plan for 2011-2012. Mr. Bebe gave an additional explanation on the mechanism of supervision. It was followed by a fruitful discussion among participants. Participants agreed with and supported the project theory and expressed importance of enhancement of supervision mechanism. However, they also agreed with the fact that it needs contrivances in establishing it to fit actual situation in Vanuatu. It is because there are serious shortages of human resources, fund, time, and management skills in health system of Vanuatu. As one of strategies suggested from the discussion, it was emphasized importance of inter-organizational cooperation among MOH, Provincial Health offices, and donors in order to maximize the use of opportunities and limited resources.



Tonga

The Second Working Group workshop

It is necessary for MOH to perceive the training needs of reproductive health and clinical nurses in order to implement the NB-IST. The working group members assembled in Tongatapu and had two-day workshop on 28th and 29th July following the first workshop held in May 2011. In this workshop, they finalized the Competency Standard (CS) for Registered Nurse and its assessment tools, and have started IST manual development for strengthening the NB-IST mechanism. They will conduct assessment with this finalized CS in the following months.



Photos of Activities



Working group meeting
<Fiji>



Working group meeting
<Vanuatu>



PCM Workshop
<Fiji>



Working group meeting
<Tonga>

Activities July - September, 2011

Fiji

- S&CTraining
- Regional Training

Tonga

- CS Training
- CS assessment
- Working group workshop
- Baseline survey

Vanuatu

- Working group meeting
- Baseline survey

Information

Please send your ideas on the title of this newsletter.

We would be pleased to accept your active participation in this newsletter. Please send us any articles and/or pictures relevant to the NB-IST and S&C.

Please send us your opinions on the project and the newsletter.

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