

Community Health Project



Project Site Caazapa Province

1. Background of Project

In Paraguay, the health service system at the primary level—the most accessible health care for the people—is poorly organized and people in general have insufficient knowledge about prevention of diseases. As a result, many cases become critical due to a lack of early treatment. Thus, the Government of Paraguay identified improvement of community health services focused on Primary Health Care (PHC) as an important health issue, and was seeking to initiate more participatory health care from which the community people can benefit directly.

To this end, the Government of Paraguay requested cooperation from Japan, which had already carried out cooperation activities in Paraguay on tropical endemic diseases, in the form of development of a model PHC system that would be applicable nationwide.

2. Project Overview

(1) Period of Cooperation

1 December 1994–30 November 1999

(2) Type of Cooperation

Project-type Technical Cooperation

(3) Partner Country's Implementing Organization

Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare

(4) Narrative Summary

1) Overall Goal

In Paraguay, health system and health services are strengthened and people's living environment is improved.

2) Project Purpose

Nationwide-applicable Primary Health Care model for the community health system is developed in the selected areas.

3) Outputs

- a) Nationwide health sector survey is conducted.
- b) Participatory community health survey is

conducted in the selected model areas.

- c) IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) for the health sector is developed, implemented, and evaluated.
- d) Health sector personnel are trained.
- e) Institutional structure is developed for the purpose of strengthening the community health program.

4) Inputs

Japanese Side

Long-term experts	8
Short-term experts	13
Trainees received	13
Equipment	200 million yen
Local cost	72 million yen

Paraguayan Side

Counterparts	13
Land and facilities	
Equipment purchased	
Local cost	

3. Members of Evaluation Team

Team Leader:

Fujiro SENDO, Professor, Immunology and Parasitology Department, Faculty of Medicine, University of Yamagata

Tropical Medicine:

Takatoshi KOBAYAKAWA, Professor, Department of International Environment and Tropical Medicine, Tokyo Women's Medical University

Medical Administration:

Masato MUGITANI, Director of International Cooperation, International Affairs Division, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Planning and Evaluation:

Akihiro MATSUMOTO, Deputy Director, Second Medical Cooperation Division, Medical Cooperation Department, JICA

4. Period of Evaluation

19 July 1999-1 August 1999

5. Result of Evaluation

(1) Efficiency

The expenditure for equipment provided by the project seems rather big compared to the size of the model area (total population: 135 million, number of facilities operated by the Ministry of Health: 45), however, the team evaluates that overall inputs were appropriate and sufficient results were obtained. In particular, the donation of radios was considered to be the most useful, leading to improved communication among health facilities. Further, periodic modification of the amount and quality of inputs through monitoring was highly appreciated .

(2) Effectiveness

All of the expected outcomes in each area were completed as planned. Further, among the four activities (radio communications network and reinforcement of health facilities, training for health auxiliaries, health education through community participation, and mobile clinics) that were components for the community health model, some of those were already adopted nationwide. Thus, it can be concluded that the level of achievement of the project purpose was highly attained.

(3) Impact

As a result of the project, the major concern of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare of Paraguay shifted towards community health. The evidence is that the Government of Paraguay officially requested Japan to implement a similar project, "Nursing and Midwifery Human Resources Development Project" to strengthen community health in three southern provinces (Itapua, Misiones, and Neembucu). Further, through the "Health Promotion Radio Program" some conventional social issues formerly considered to be taboo came to be openly discussed through visit to health facilities and exchanges of opinions among listeners.

(4) Relevance

Under the situation where there had been no established policies on PHC, the project's efforts to tentatively develop a nationwide-applicable community health service model in Caazapa Province was acknowledged as effective in improving the public health status of the people of Paraguay.

(5) Sustainability

Financial, technical, and organizational sustainability seem low at this point. The total project budget was drastically decreased from 112 million US dollars in 1997 to 81 million dollars in 1998. After this incident, project personnel and the Ministry held numerous discussions,



An expert giving a lecture on health for local people

and consequently the budget was slightly increased to 91 million US dollars in 1999. However, it was questioned whether the project could maintain all of the activities scheduled within this budget. Further, the level of technology transferred to the counterparts during the five years of the project period has not yet been sufficient to be sustainable. Moreover, frequent personnel changes within the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (the implementing organization) hinder the appropriate continuation of transferred technologies within the institution.

6. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

(1) Recommendations

Up to the present, cooperation among the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare and donors has been insufficient in the health sector. It was recommended that the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare of Paraguay actively improve the project's sustainability and efficiency through coordination with other concerned institutions. In order to promote this, it is important that the Ministry implement its future institutional plan through reassessment of activities planned from the organizational and financial points of view, and through continuation of human resources training from a technical point of view.

7. Follow-up Situation

The Project-type Technical Cooperation "Strengthening Continuing Education in Nursing and Midwifery in the South of the Republic of Paraguay" (February 2001-February 2006) is being implemented for the purpose of establishing a continuing education system for human resources development in the areas of nursing and obstetrics, since these areas are considered to be as the key for improving health services in the three southern provinces of Itapua, Misiones, and Neembucu.