



PAHO/WHO Technical Cooperation 2010-2011





TRAINING HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH

The challenges facing primary health care in Haiti are many: limited access to primary health care services, limited availability of essential medicines and supplies in health centers, high cost for services, lack of trained health professionals, among others.

With only 2.5 doctors per 10,000 inhabitants for Haiti's population of approximately 9.7 million people, and only 26% of births being attended by a skilled health professional, the lack of trained health professionals in Haiti has ramifications throughout the health care system, particularly in primary care health services.

Because of poor primary care services, Haitians turn directly to the second and third levels of health care (hospitals and more specialized centers), which are then overwhelmed by the large demand. This situation, which existed well before the January 2010 earthquake, was only amplified by the disaster and This led to the arrival of vast numbers of NGOs into the health sector and a governmental decision to provide free health care in all public health institutions for the first two to three months following the earthquake, making basic health care services widely accessible to Haitians for the first time.

When the cholera outbreak that hit the country in October 2010, other weaknesses in the primary health care system emerged: a functional health network at the community level to identify the cholera cases as they occurred and appropriately guide their treatment did not exist; mechanisms for rapid dissemination of public health information, such as cholera prevention messages, health promotion activities and examples of good practices, did not exist either; and Surveillance capabilities at the community level were very weak.

To strengthen primary health care, community health promotion and community level surveillance, more trained health professionals are needed in Haiti. PAHO/WHO technical cooperation will focus on supporting the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP as per its acronym in French) to adjust to the gradual withdrawal of NGOs from the health sector and the continuing cholera epidemic, by training more professionals to fill in the gaps. PAHO/WHO has mobilized US\$ 600,000 for human resources related activities.

Activities carried out:

- On March 27, 2010, a tripartite cooperation agreement was signed between the governments of Brazil, Cuba and Haiti, which included a key component on Human Resources Training (Formation des Ressources Humaines). PAHO/WHO will be supporting the cooperation agreement in the area of human resources for health, epidemiological surveillance and vaccination.
- At the request of the MSPP, a workshop to identify and prioritize the human resource needs of the health sector was completed in June 2010. Training of more first level, or primary care, health workers was concluded to be the greatest need, and called for the training of more multi-skilled community health workers, nursing assistants as well as public health officers.
- Definition of a training curriculum for Multi-skilled Community Health Workers (Agent de Santé Communautaire Polyvalents ASCP) based on Haitian and Brazilian experiences.
- Workshop held to present the Brazilian experience of training Brazilian, Cuban and Haitian teachers in Fortaleza, Brazil.
- Definition and validation of selection criteria for individuals chosen to participate in the ASCP training and the selection of the first class of 60 participants was completed, from the city of Carrefour.
- ACSP training is currently in progress (as of April 2011) and the ASCP students are being integrated into community mobilization efforts in the fight against cholera in the city of Carrefour.

Challenges and next steps:

- Complete the training of the first ASCP cohort of 60 and organize the professional integration of the ASCP into the health care system of the commune of Carrefour.
- Evaluate, revise and revalidate the training curriculum for the ASCP program and recruit and train trainers for the future cohorts of ASCPs in order to replicate the ASCP selection and training procedure in other areas, with the goal of training 2,000 ASCPs.
- Define the curriculum for community nursing assistants, identify trainers for the nursing assistants and begin training, and later develop a mechanism for integration of the trained community nursing assistants into the Haitian public health system.
- Integrate and combine the training process for health technicians and public health officers and begin public health officer training, and later develop a similar system for insertion of the trainees into the public health system.
- Train the first class of biomedical technicians for the maintenance of equipment.
- Support the training of medical transport teams.