

JOICFP NEWS

Reproductive Health at the Grass Roots

Vietnam demonstrates power of community participation to seminar participants

The need to reflect a reproductive health perspective in programs at the grass roots was the main theme of the Regional Traveling Seminar on Community-based Reproductive Health Services, held in Vietnam from October 26 - November 2. The seminar recognized the efforts made to shift program emphasis at the policy-making level from family planning to the comprehensive reproductive health approach following the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) of 1994. It focused on the urgent need to discuss and examine reproductive health needs at the implementation level in communities.

The seminar drew participants from Bangladesh, Laos, Nepal and the Philippines implementing the regional, UNFPA-Supported Sustainable Community-based Family Planning/Maternal and Child Health (FP/MCH) Project with Special Focus on Women (RAS/P11). They were joined by participants from China and Vietnam where the Integrated

community participation as a focus of project implementation, the participants were divided into two groups with each group visiting two districts in two provinces, Nghe An in the north and Long An in the south of Vietnam where the UNFPA-supported project (VIE/88/PO7) was implemented.

The seminar was geared to determining the scope of reproductive health services that should be available at the community level; to discussing strategies which will enable the provision of these services; and to exchange information on the follow-up efforts of ICPD related to reproductive health. Participants were requested to contribute to two reports. The two field observation teams had to assist with a report of their impressions of the Vietnam situation. Each country group also had to provide a report on reproductive health needs in their country and recommendations to be reflected in their projects.

According to the majority of participants, Vietnam was an ideal base for learning about the effectiveness of community motivation and participation. The participants found the Vietnamese extremely forthright about successes and shortcomings of the project, which made it easier to pinpoint issues and efforts being made. They noted numerous examples of the community spirit of mutual self-help and a commitment to raising the standard of health and quality of life. Despite the fast-track economic development of the country, the participants found that the majority of people live in poor conditions. The national average per-capita income is only US\$220 - 250 and in the north where JOICFP's project is implemented. Per-capita income ranks 49th among the country's 53 provinces and cities. The average income of farmers in the north is about US\$50 a year.

Despite these desperately poor conditions, the people of communes have come up with innovative ways to ensure the availability of health-care services. In one commune, each



A project staff member explains the community savings group in Long An which provides credit for small enterprises, particularly those run by women.

household provides 2kg of rice a year to support health workers. Participants learned that in another commune, the people provided additional rice to support the construction of a health center. Not only was the determination of the community impressive for the visitors, but most were also moved by the strong commitment shown by community leaders to project activities.

Both field observation groups were surprised by the rapid way that Vietnam has integrated reproductive health services into its existing FP/MCH service system at the grass roots. Participants were impressed that discussions were already under way at the community level on how to shift the emphasis of the project to the more comprehensive service delivery of reproductive health. Some examples of this shift were the efforts to decrease the rate of induced abortion and provide more post- and pre-abortion counseling and expand post-natal care.

Another impressive aspect of the Vietnamese project was the active role that



Prof. Le Van Truyen, vice minister of health of Vietnam, addresses the participants.

Community-based FP Project is implemented.

A total of 25 took part in the seminar, organized as part of UNFPA-supported regional activities under the joint auspices of UNFPA, IPPF and the Ministry of Health of Vietnam.

To draw attention to the importance of

Working for Shared Goals

women play in the project and the empowerment of women found at all levels. They learned that women are involved not only as service providers or recipients, but function as part of the policy-making and decision-making body. Government efforts to raise the status of women in terms of health and economic development were also observed.

The team expressed appreciation for the role of the Women's Union. They noted that the network of motivated volunteers effectively works to promote health education and FP and provides a vital linkage between the health center and community. Several strategies were proposed to sustain the volunteer system including incentives for volunteers in kind, the provision of more IEC materials and the involvement of volunteers in expanded income-generation and credit programs.

One of the challenges noted by the visitors was the need to increase the range of contraceptives available to women and provide wider access to services. Noting the high literacy rate and awareness of reproductive health including FP among women, the participants urged action to meet unmet needs.

A festival held to celebrate International Cooperation Day in Japan on September 30 and October 1 provided a unique opportunity for an intentional cast of panelists to discuss population, HIV/AIDS and women in development (WID) at a symposium held in Tokyo. The event, the '95 International Cooperation Festival Symposium — Talk-You, was organized by the Committee on International Cooperation Festival and attended by over 700 people. It was divided into two sessions to provide the viewpoints of both policy-makers and NGOs on the Global Issues Initiative (GII) on Population and AIDS.

The first session included a senator from the Philippines, Dr. J. M. Flavie, former secretary of health. He was joined by Dr. David Bloom, acting executive director, Institute for International Development, Harvard University; Paul White, minister counselor, Development Cooperation, U.S. Embassy in Tokyo (USAID); Akiko Domoto, member, House of Councilors of Japan; Dr. Masaharu Ito, councilor,

Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health and Welfare; and Norio Hattori, deputy director general, Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Hattori and White also joined the second session, which focused on NGO perspectives.

The other panelists comprised Peggy Curlin, president, Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA); Mary Guinn Delaney, HIV/AIDS program manager, National Council for International Health (NCIH); Kiyoko Ikegami, senior program officer, JOICFP; Sayoko Arai, president, Tokyo Forum; and Yumiko Jansson-Yanagisawa, president, Japan's Network for Women and Health.

Referring to JOICFP's experience, Ikegami emphasized that community participation should be a major focus of programs promoting reproductive health including family planning.



JOICFP Guides JICA Course

In a demonstration of smooth government-NGO collaboration, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) entrusted another of its international population-related activities to JOICFP. Aiko Iijima and Kiyoko Ikegami, both JOICFP senior program officers, served as course leaders of the Training Course on Population and Reproductive Health. The course was held from August 28 - November 2 and was the second since the Japanese government launched the Global Issues Initiative (GII) on Population and AIDS in 1994.

The 10-week course, aimed at Japanese co-medical staff preparing to work in international assistance, included a field trip to Thailand and Tokyo sessions before and after the Thai trip. For four weeks, the JOICFP officers served as course leaders and were involved in basic training including language training for the rest.

The training conducted by the JOICFP staff included lectures and discussions on JICA and JOICFP programs. Paul White, minister counselor, Development Cooperation, U.S. Embassy in Tokyo (USAID), and Karen Morita, program officer, Population and Nutrition Department, USAID, also spoke about the

USAID system of international assistance.

This year's course was attended by 10 nurses and midwives, the majority of whom had experience working as Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV). The first course conducted last year trained seven co-medics, two of whom are now serving abroad.

The course content was comprehensive with lectures on issues related to population and reproductive health, the environment, food and energy. The participants also learned about the Japanese administrative system of maternal and child health (MCH), the experience of Japanese NGOs working in family planning (FP) and MCH and actual activities of the Japanese government and NGOs. The entire course was conducted from a women in development (WID) perspective.

The Thai field trip was geared to learning about the progress of the Thai government's FP program and the role and successes of NGOs such as the Population and Community Development Association (PDA). The team was also introduced to the reproductive health programs of UNFPA and observed a JICA program.

Through the trip to Khon Kaen, the



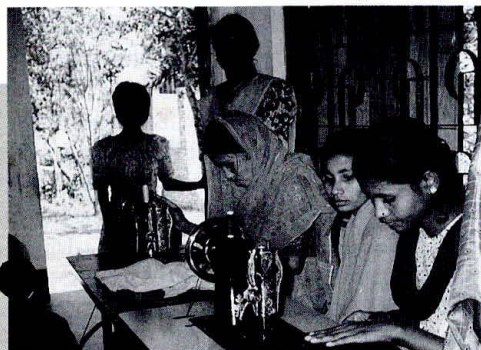
Pregnant women discuss health issues at a health center in Khon Kaen.

co-medics gained a deep understanding of the Thai health system and promotion of FP/MCH. They observed an MCH hospital and grass-roots health center. The participants spoke freely with staff and pregnant women visiting the facilities and enthusiastically interacted with other co-medical staff.

On return to Tokyo, the participants expressed satisfaction with the training, particularly with the insights into NGO activities in the field. The trainees, who have been registered as experts for international assistance of the Japanese government, showed a keen interest in being dispatched abroad.

Joining Forces for GII

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan is making good on its pledge to involve NGOs closely in the implementation of the Global Issues Initiative (GII) on Population and



The Japanese government is working with NGOs to assist women through its WID Initiative.

AIDS. At its eighth meeting on the GII for NGOs on November 9 in Tokyo, ministry officials outlined GII progress and listened to the opinions of representatives of Japanese NGOs involved in the field.

Seeking Urban Solutions

The Second Group Training Course on Integrated Urban Policy was held in Kobe, Japan, from November 1 - 30, a city undergoing dramatic reconstruction following the Great Hanshin Earthquake of January 17, 1995. The training was organized by the Asian Urban



Information Center in cooperation with UNFPA and was attended by 11 participants from the six countries of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and China.

Participants were introduced to the progress and the urban policies implemented by Kobe and other Japanese cities as a means of contributing to the solution of urban problems in their countries. A lecture on family planning systems of Japan was provided on November 7 by JOICFP Senior Program Officer Ryoichi Suzuki, who also spoke about the experiences of Japanese NGOs including JOICFP in the international cooperation field. The training course included observation tours and the exchange of opinions and country reports.

First on the agenda was the guidelines for selecting NGOs in developing countries for Grant Assistance for Grass-roots Projects funding. A small-scale form of ODA from the Japanese government, the funds are allocated to local NGOs through embassies in respective developing countries. Population and HIV/AIDS projects have been given priority for the funding since the GII was announced last year. NGO representatives requested MOFA to conduct public relations activities in countries to ensure a wider range of NGOs, including small or new bodies learn about the funding.

The MOFA officials also provided an update on the involvement of NGOs in human resource development under the GII. A recent training course entrusted to JOICFP by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was noted as a good example of GO-NGO collaboration. Such events also help build the institutional capacities of NGOs. The MOFA officials reaffirmed that the Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development (FASID) training course, to held in Japan and Thailand in January and February, is now open to NGO participation as the result of discussions with NGOs.

Following MOFA's announcement of the Women in Development (WID) Initiative at the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, the officials stressed the ministry's efforts to involve NGOs in project formulation in follow-up work of the WID initiative and ICPD have been going well.

The officials commented that from the initial stage, the initiative focuses on strengthening the capabilities of women in economic and social activities such as small-scale enterprises.

The NGOs were also informed of the progress of GII project formulation missions to priority countries. An NGO representative was included in missions to India and a written report was provided to the participants at the meeting.

The ministry officials and NGOs agreed that JOICFP will function as the official liaison between MOFA and NGOs for future meetings.

Impressions of Beijing

The mass media's view of the 4th World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, was the theme of a regular study meeting of the Council on Population Education, held at JOICFP on October 23. The council, which has been working to promote population education for 22 years, was established by experts, mass media and representatives of NGOs, in 1973 ahead of the world population conference held in Bucharest.

The meeting featured representatives of three major national newspapers, the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* and *Mainichi Shimbun*, and a major news agency, Kyodo News Service. All four journalists had attended the Beijing conference and provided a range of views on the event.

Commenting that the conference was a beginning for action rather than a conclusion, the women panelists expressed optimism that the event would contribute to women's empowerment. They stressed that the general public should not be complacent about the outcome of the conference and should use the Platform for Action as a guide for action.

Another positive aspect of the conference for the women journalists was the way it built upon the foundations laid down by the Cairo process. The acceptance of the reproductive health and rights issues came as a relief for one of the journalists who had been concerned that the Beijing event would lose gains made at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) of Cairo.

The success of Beijing can be attributed to the many women who fought for recognition of reproductive health and rights despite a concerted effort by Catholic and Muslim countries, it was noted. The acceptance of reproductive health and rights means that the importance of these issues is reaffirmed by the majority of countries and women worldwide, they said. The conference also sends a clear message about the role of women in the 21st century, they added.



Panelists

China Project Set to Expand

Preparations are on track for the start of the 5th cycle of the Integrated Project (IP) in China at the beginning of 1996. The project is to be implemented in eight areas of eight new IP provinces. As part of the preparations, the Training Seminar on Conducting a Baseline Survey for the 5th Cycle was held in Taicang IP Center, Jiangsu Province, together with the

utilization of IEC materials for health education. Insights into the experiences of the IP in China were provided by project personnel who discussed implementation of the project over the last 12 years. The participants were also taught methods of conducting baseline surveys and knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) surveys which were scheduled to be carried out in 5th cycle areas in October and November 1995.

The seminar venue was convenient for participants to learn firsthand about the activities of the Taicang IP Center which is conducting a school health program in addition to providing a range of FP/MCH and preventive health services on a fee-charged basis. The participants observed parasite control activities of the center in a primary school and were impressed with the interaction that the activities fostered among parents, students, teachers and IP personnel. In discussions with parents, participants were surprised to learn how deeply

aware the people have become of health issues through the project. The seminar also included field observation of activities of the town hospital.

Following the training, the joint JOICFP-Chinese team visited one of the new project areas of Dali County, Shaanxi Province, located 120km from Xi'an City. The county is well-chosen for starting a project to improve the health and quality of life of the people. It has poor socioeconomic conditions with per-capita income for farmers at half the national average. The hospital delivery rate is 43%, while infant

mortality is as high as 30 per 1,000 births. The team learned that only 25% of water sources offer safe drinking water, while sanitary latrines are virtually nonexistent. The infection rate of roundworm (*Ascaris*) is 48%. The IP will be implemented in 28 villages of two townships to cover a target population of 48,000.



A Japanese expert provides technical assistance on production and use of IEC materials.

Training Seminar on the Evaluation Survey of the 4th Cycle from September 17 - 25. Some 100 participants attended including 48 representatives of 5th cycle areas, 18 from 10 5th-cycle areas of 10 provinces, Chinese experts, personnel of the Taicang center and Japanese experts.

To ensure that IP personnel fully understand the objectives of the IP, the seminar included lectures on project concept and strategies, ways to improve the living conditions of the people, technical aspects of the project including parasite control and data collection, family planning and maternal and child health (FP/MCH) and development and

Brazilian Project Gears for Self-reliance

The Integrated Project (IP) being promoted in the slums of São Paulo, Brazil, has taken a major step toward self-reliance with the implementing agency, Centro Materno-Infantil/Planejamento Familiar (CMI/PF), taking full control of the project on October 1, 1995. The project, which focuses on reproductive health including adolescent health education and the prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS, is also being promoted in Asunción, Paraguay, as part of CMI/PF's efforts to share experiences and know-how. CMI/PF has made South-to-South cooperation a main focus of future activities as it gears toward self-reliance.

CMI/PF has accumulated considerable experiences and know-how through the implementation of the community-based project which was established in 1983. Aware that



Dr. Milton Nakamura, president, CMI/PF, outside the clinic in Asunción with staff members.

these experiences are applicable in other developing countries, CMI/PF began to extend technical assistance abroad and recently established a clinic in Asunción.

The IP has expanded over the years to cover a range of health-related activities. While its focus remains on IEC programs for youths and reproductive health and prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS, CMI/PF provides medical and technical services in addition to conducting research and study activities. It has also developed a range of innovative programs whereby it markets its expertise through fee-charged IEC activities.

UN 50th Anniversary Feted in Tokyo

The 50th anniversary of the United Nations was celebrated in Tokyo on October 24 with a commemorative ceremony. Attended by some 3,400 people, the event was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UN 50th Anniversary National Committee of Japan and the UN Association of Japan. The ceremony drew dignitaries including the emperor and empress of Japan, Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, Foreign Minister Yohei Kono and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata. JOICFP, which has a long history as an NGO working in cooperation with the UN, particularly UNFPA, was represented at the event.

Lao Women Welcome Birth Spacing

Family planning is enthusiastically welcomed by women of Laos in areas where birth spacing is being promoted by the Mother and Child Health Institute (MCHI) of the Ministry of Health through JOICFP's project. With a total fertility rate of 6.7, a maternal mortality rate of over 650 per 100,000 deliveries and an infant mortality rate of 123 for 1,000 births, the need for family planning and maternal and child health care is enormous.

The country is one of four selected for implementation of the regional UNFPA-supported Sustainable Community-based Family Planning/Maternal and Child Health (FP/MCH) Project with Special Focus on Women (RAS/92/P11), which began in Laos in 1993. Unique as a birth-spacing project, it is the first outreach project using an MCH/FP mobile team and the first to set up steering committees at all levels including the provincial, municipal, district and village levels. Through the steering committee framework, women, mostly from the Lao Women's Union, are collaborating as providers and recipients, and in planning and decision making. The success of this framework encouraged UNFPA to set up the same system for its country project with MCHI as implementor, a steering

committee system involving the Women's Union and the use of a volunteer system.

To assess progress of JOICFP's project, an internal evaluation workshop was held in Vientiane from October 4 - 5 and drew all concerned people from the district, provincial and municipal levels. An independent evaluation could not be conducted in Laos due to the newness of birth spacing, which was endorsed by the government in 1994 when the national population policy was adopted, and the lack of private bodies with experience.

The first work plan for the project was drawn up based on the results of a knowledge, attitude and practice survey conducted by MCHI before project launch. The project was then implemented under MCHI, which handles monitoring, supervision and training.

One of the aims of the evaluation workshop was to gather all people involved to jointly review the achievements and discuss issues to be solved and needs yet to be met. During discussions, participants noted that women's birth-spacing needs are met where services are available; fee-charging has already been introduced toward sustainability of services; health personnel have gained confidence in their work; and the visitation rate at the



Demand for contraception outstrips supply in Laos where the total fertility rate is 6.7.

government hospitals in project areas has risen thanks to the increased credibility of health-care services through the project, which assures services and supply of essential drugs.

Noting the significant demand for project continuation, participants commented that it will take more time and effort to sustain services, especially supplies of contraceptives and essential drugs. The need for greater contraceptive choice was also pointed out. For the initial phase, a limited choice of injectables, pills and condoms were made available in view of the limited number of trained health staff and importance of guaranteeing service quality. Calling for a wider choice of pill and the introduction of the IUD, participants also noted the need for training to ensure quality.

The participants agreed that due to the strong demand, the project period should be extended and the project area expanded.

Asia Heads for Grayer Future

In the next 20 - 30 years much of Asia will experience a dramatic increase in the proportion of elderly in national populations. For some countries, particularly in Eastern Asia, the proportion of elderly in national populations will jump from an average of just under 10% to reach around 17%. The formulation and implementation of policies for the aged will therefore be essential to determine the well-being of this growing segment of the population of most countries in the Asian Region.

The JOICFP regional project "Promotion of Awareness and Policy Formulation on Aging in the Asian Region (RAS/92/P13)" was established for the 1992 - 1995 period to develop a regional network on aging and to strengthen the knowledge and capacity of policy makers, administrators and program

managers in formulating policies and programs on aging. The UNFPA-supported project was designed to build upon an earlier four-year project "Creation of Awareness on Aging for Policy-making Purposes in the Asian Region (RAS/88/P021)" and comparative research of aging in China and Japan. Under the projects 10 training seminars, three workshops and one symposium have been implemented by JOICFP. They were attended by over 300 policy-makers and administrators.

To assess the results of the second-phase project, nine experts from the region gathered in Tokyo from September 21 - 22 for the Project Evaluation Meeting. The participants reviewed policy issues and program needs in the region and JOICFP-organized activities, and made recommendations for future programs.

The meeting focused on five main areas of critical concern: the demographic situation; social and family support; health-care concerns; financial security; and policies and programs on aging.

Noting that the awareness of aging issues has increased in Asia during the last phase of the aging project, the participants commented that the next step will be to put this awareness to use in policy formulation and implementation. The participants agreed that the working group of experts created during the last two phases of the project will contribute to this next step.



Rehabilitation for the elderly in Singapore.

Learning Ways to Provide Assistance

Women and world peace were two popular topics of this year's Seminar on International Cooperation in Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning (MCH/FP), held in Tokyo from September 25 - October 6, 1995. The topic of women was chosen following the 4th World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, while the topic of world peace reflected the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII. Recorded television programs were

used to highlight the present situation of women around the world and the outcomes of the Beijing conference. Participants also learned about the impact that war

has on the lives of ordinary people, particularly women and children, and were encouraged to use international assistance opportunities as a means to promote peace.

The 26th of its kind, the seminar was subsidized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by JOICFP. It was attended by 16 Japanese midwives, nurses and public health nurses interested in providing international assistance in developing countries. The main objectives of the training were to deepen understanding of issues related to international cooperation and to broaden technical cooperation channels in Japan to

create a network for international assistance. Launched in 1972, the seminar has been attended by a total of 581 health professionals.

This year's course provided information on various aspects of international assistance on population issues, volunteer work, reproductive health and rights, gender issues, adolescent health and communication and administrative techniques. Participants were also given an outline of Japan's postwar experiences in the FP/MCH field and the application of these experiences through JOICFP's Integrated Project (IP) in developing countries.

Course leader for the event was Dr. Minoru Muramatsu, executive director, Family Planning Federation of Japan (FPFJ), who encouraged participants to broaden their perspectives through the seminar. They were also introduced to activities of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) by former JOCV members among participants.

Commenting on what she had learned, public health nurse Suzuyo Tanaka said the course gave her a good opportunity to learn about the situation of women following the

Beijing conference. "I realize that there are a lot of things I can do in Japan to foster international cooperation," she said.

The course provided medical school lecturer Kazuko Hamamatsu with an opportunity to consider what it means to be a woman in society. She said that she will bring the new consciousness to her job as an instructor of trainee nurses.

"I appreciated the seminar since it stimulated me to think about how I can use my experience as a volunteer in a developing country," said nutritionist Chieko Semba. "I will do my best to promote international cooperation from a grass-roots perspective," said Semba, who formerly worked with refugees in Thailand and Bangladesh.

For Noriko Kono, a midwife and former JOCV member to Malawi, the course provided a clear understanding of global issues.

"The seminar was also a good opportunity to learn the experiences of others in various fields," she said.



Seminar participants



Former JOCV members share experiences.

From Simple Beginnings

More people are benefiting from the JOICFP Voluntary Fund as contributions increase through the collection and sale of used prepaid cards. A total of ¥13,094,149 (approximately US\$134,000 at an exchange rate of ¥98 to \$1) was recently earmarked for projects in eight countries out of proceeds from the sale of cards collected between January 1 and June 30, 1995, and cash donations. The funds will be used to improve the quality of life of people through community-based projects executed by JOICFP in Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Guatemala, Tanzania and Zambia.

The Used Prepaid Card Campaign continues to gather steam since it was launched in Japan in August 1993 by JOICFP as a means to raise funds and create awareness of the needs of people in developing countries. The cards, used to pay for trains, telephones and road charges, are prized by collectors worldwide for

their quality printing and attractive designs.

About 80% of the cards are sent abroad. JOICFP, which collects and sorts the donated used cards with the help of volunteers, sells each card for ¥7 to ¥8 (7 - 8 cents). Some 7 million cards have now been collected by JOICFP since the campaign started.

The campaign, which has caught the attention of the media, educational institutions, businesses, social and cultural groups and individuals, has been effective for providing the public with a simple yet effective means to assist developing countries. The campaign has been featured in newspapers and on television all over Japan, while the Japanese FM Network comprising 34 FM radio stations is airing the campaign on a regular basis.

Funds are also being allocated through the Red Cross to victims of the Great Hanshin Earthquake which struck Kobe and surrounding areas on January 17, 1995.



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan recently produced a new logo for Japanese ODA. The design was selected from among 4,899 entries submitted by members of the public.

Publishing Milestone for JFPA

The Japan Family Planning Association (JFPA) celebrated the publication of the 500th issue of its monthly newsletter *Family and Health* on November 1, 1995. A pioneering publication in its field, the newsletter was first published by a group of family planning pioneers led by JOICFP Chairman Chojiro Kunii in 1954. Outside the venue where the inauguration of the Family Planning Federation

of Japan (FPFJ) took place on April 18 of 1954, Kunii and other pioneers, including JOICFP Executive Director Yasuo Kon, handed out the first issue of the newsletter amid drizzling rain. The same day his group started the activities of JFPA.

From such modest beginnings, the newsletter expanded to become a popular source of information on a range of issues related to population and reproductive health including family planning. Its pages, which also serve as a forum for ideas and opinions, have reflected the changes that have taken place in the field as Japan underwent its transition from a high-fertility country to one with exceedingly low fertility.

Very early on in his career in the preventive health field, Kunii understood the importance of IEC activities. By launching the newsletter, he sought to bring attention to the serious damage that the high rate of induced abortion was having on women's health in 1954, the year before the official number of abortions reached its peak of 1.17 million in 1955. The first issue focused on the need for promotion of family planning to reduce the high number of maternal deaths and health problems caused by abortions and featured an article on the visit of U.S. family planning pioneer Margaret Sanger. The newsletter's continued focus on abortion helped raise the alarm in Japan and gave momentum to the movement to promote the health of women by making contraception more widely available.

Initially called *Family Planning*, the newsletter was renamed in 1982 to reflect the changing needs within the field and the changing role of JFPA as a leading NGO involved in reproductive health including family planning. Today, the publication is read by people from a variety of fields and encompasses articles on a wider range of health needs.



41 years ago

Turning the Page on Illiteracy

The local government of Toshima City in Tokyo again allocated part of its fiscal 1995 budget to cover the donation of 30,000 notebooks to assist with literacy promotion in developing countries. The city, a pioneering member of the Municipal Coordinating Committee for Overseas Bicycle Assistance (MCCOBA), also allocated funds in its FY1994 budget for 30,000 notebooks which were sent abroad within the empty space in shipping containers holding donated reconditioned bicycles. The 13 countries of Brazil, Cameroon, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Kenya, Mexico, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia received notebooks since 1993.

The scheme is also supported by the Toshima Printing Company Cooperative, the Toshima Branch of the All-Japan Printing Industry Cooperative and Tokyo Municipal Printing Cooperative. The notebooks are recycled from off-cuts of paper taken during printing processes.

The scheme has helped focus attention on the shortage of writing materials hampering literacy promotion in developing countries. JOICFP has used the donation activities to create awareness of the needs at the grass roots and secure assistance from the public and private bodies. JOICFP keeps city officials informed of the impact of the activities with reports and photos from the field.

Notebooks that have been sent abroad are used in primary schools, at nurseries and by adults in literacy-related activities. By promoting literacy among women, JOICFP expects to contribute to the promotion of family planning.

Ties of Cooperation

Local governments in Japan are forming ties of cooperation with a growing number of developing countries through the donation of reconditioned bicycles and other items which contribute to improving health and raising the quality of lives of people at the grass roots. The



Felix with Shizuoka Mayor Zenkichi Kojima

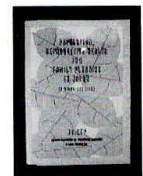
Municipal Coordinating Committee for Overseas Bicycle Assistance (MCCOBA), a driving force in donation activities, consists of 15 local governments and JOICFP.

Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of Cameroon in Japan Mbayu Felix expressed his appreciation of MCCOBA during courtesy calls to Tokorozawa and Shizuoka cities on September 29 and October 16, respectively. Felix thanked city officials for 900 reconditioned bicycles that will have been shipped to his country by the end of 1995. He said the bicycles are used to support family planning workers and the activities of agricultural extension workers and postal delivery.

Felix said that by joining hands with JOICFP, the member cities of MCCOBA have been able to do a great deal. He encouraged MCCOBA to continue its efforts, adding that it was a well-coordinated body. Felix added that MCCOBA is a good example of the growing international trend of local governments assisting developing countries.

New Publication

JOICFP published a revised version of its English-language *Population, Reproductive Health and Family Planning in Japan — a Bird's Eye View* in August 1995. An excellent source of population-related information on Japan, the 48-page booklet introduces various social issues related to population, reproductive health and family planning in Japan with over 50 helpful charts in full color. The latest edition has been expanded to include the issues of aging and women's and adolescents' health. The booklet is available from JOICFP at ¥2,000 plus postage and handling charges. Contact JOICFP for more information.



VOICE OF VOICES

By Chojiro Kunii

Five Years of POSIVA

The Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid (POSIVA) scheme was launched five years ago. Under this fund-raising scheme, postal savings account holders donate 20% of the annual interest on ordinary savings to POSIVA, which is administered by the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications of Japan. The ministry distributes the funds to NGOs for their international cooperation programs.

This epoch-making donation scheme to involve the Japanese public in international cooperation activities has continued to grow steadily. Since it was launched in January

1991, the scheme had attracted a total of 18.28 million account holders as of August 1995. This is equivalent to one out of every seven Japanese holding these accounts. The donors range from small children to elderly people, reflecting the awareness of the needs in developing countries and the willingness to do something to support international cooperation. The scheme deserves praise as a brilliant fund-raising concept, one that makes the most of the network of more than 23,600 post offices across the country and the goodwill of the people.

The total capital donated through the scheme reached over ¥2.81 billion (US\$28.67 million at an exchange rate of ¥98 to \$1) in 1995. These funds were shared by 305 international cooperation projects organized in 61 countries by 235 Japanese NGOs.

JOICFP is a donor and beneficiary of a

number of donation schemes. We keep our own postal savings account and also receive a share of the POSIVA funds as a recipient NGO. We are using the funds carefully to help the people in developing countries improve their health and welfare standards. We have been cooperating with projects for women's self-support, child health improvement, and health and environmental sanitation.

The funds we received went to projects in four countries in 1991, and six countries in 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995. Messages of appreciation to the Japanese public are conveyed from the communities in these countries every year through JOICFP.

Despite the small amounts donated by each account holder, they soon add up to an impressive sum and the money and goodwill go a long way to encourage families around the world. This scheme has taught us that individuals can participate actively in international cooperation activities.

ANNOUNCEMENT

4th Regional Technical Committee Meeting on Sustainable Community-based FP/MCH Project with Special Focus on Women

Objectives: To evaluate 1st cycle (1992-1995) implementation of above project; discuss project strategies, work plan, operation, management and monitoring and evaluation scheme for 1996 and 2nd cycle (1996-1999);

and to learn Japan's experiences and know-how of reproductive health

Date: January 22 - 27, 1996

Venues: Tokyo and Hiroshima

Participants: Three key project personnel from project countries Bangladesh, Laos, Nepal and the Philippines; three key personnel from IP countries China and Vietnam; and representatives of UNFPA, IPPF, JFPA and JOICFP
Organizers: JOICFP with support of UNFPA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and IPPF, in cooperation with JFPA

Contact JOICFP for more information.

DIARY

Seventeen senior FP administrators and managers from 17 countries attended the Seminar on FP Administration for Senior Officers II 1995 from Aug. 28 - Sept. 15. Organization of the seminar was entrusted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to JOICFP.

JOICFP Executive Director Yasuo Kon; Dr. Noriji Suzuki, professor emeritus, Kochi Medical College; Reiko Mizukami, director, Dept. of IEC, Hoken Kaikan Foundation; and Junko Kajima, deputy chief, Div. of General Examination; Tokyo Health Service Association, were in China to provide technical assistance from Sept. 17 - 30. They were accompanied by JOICFP Senior Program Officer Yukio Honma and Program Officer Yoshitatsu Kanno.

Mbayu Felix, charge d'affaires, and Tabi P. Emmanuel, first secretary, Cameroon Embassy in Japan, visited MCCOBA members Tokorozawa City and Shizuoka City on Sept. 29 and Oct. 1, respectively.

Narcisa de Leon Escaler, deputy director general, International Organization for

Migration (IOM), visited JOICFP on Oct. 3 to exchange information. She was accompanied by Yorio Tanimura, director, Asia and Oceania Region, IOM.

Dr. Andrew Mason, director, Program on Population, East-West Center, visited JOICFP on Oct. 3 to exchange information.

JOICFP senior program officers Sumie Ishii and Aiko Iijima were in Laos from Oct. 1 - 8 for evaluation and work-plan creation.

JOICFP Senior Program Officer Ryoichi Suzuki was in Brazil and the U.S. from Oct. 2 - 12 for activities related to project evaluation and to exchange information with UNFPA.

JOICFP Senior Program Officer Ryoko Nishida was in Thailand and the Philippines for activities for the UNFPA-assisted project.

Six participants from five countries from a JICA-sponsored program for counterparts of bilateral technical cooperation programs in FP attended a one-day JOICFP seminar on Oct. 17 on JOICFP's IP activities.

JOICFP Senior Program Officer Atsushi Yoshino was in China from Oct. 5 - 25 to prepare for film production.

JOICFP Women's Health and Status Series

A New Animated Film

Twin Lotus

13 min., Color/English, Chinese



A newlywed couple is just beginning to live together in a beautiful riverside district in southern China. One day the wife collapses from illness while at work.

Women today must learn about their bodies and be intent upon maintaining their health so they can lead more self-reliant lives.

This film, from the Women's Health and Status Series, is a Japan-China joint production that uses an animation technique based on a traditional paper-cutting method.

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