

PD-ABJ-314

**TRIP REPORT: OFFICE
ADMINISTRATION WORK WITH
FPMD RESIDENT ADVISOR**

**PHILIPPINES DOH
OFFICE FOR SPECIAL CONCERNS**

29 JANUARY - 25 FEBRUARY 1994

Elizabeth Lewis

FAMILY PLANNING MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

**Project No.: 936-3055
Contract No.: DPE-3055-Q-00-0052-00
Task Order No.: A1726 PHDOH**

CONTENTS

I.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
II.	BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE	1
III.	ACTIVITIES/ITEMS ACCOMPLISHED	2
IV.	FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS	5
V.	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION	5
	ANNEX A: SOW	7

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ms. Elizabeth Lewis, Senior Program Assistant, Health Financing Program, made a trip to Manila, Philippines, January 29 - February 27, 1994. She worked with Ms. Taryn Vian, the Family Planning Management Development Resident Advisor in the Office for Special Concerns at the Department of Health. The scope of work covered a range of administrative aspects involved in the smooth functioning of the field office. Additional tasks (not included in the original scope of work) were carried out at the request of Ms. Vian, based upon the needs of the office.

Meetings were held with all members of the Project staff; some of these were also attended by USAID Mission staff. In addition, Ms. Lewis and Ms. Eve Nabong, Administrative Officer/Data Analyst, met with staff from the Management Sciences for Health Health Finance Development Project to gather information on personnel and procurement procedures; they also visited various vendors to discuss the procurement of computer systems.

II. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Ms. Lewis' visit to the Project came just a few months after the Resident Advisor arrived. Ms. Vian had hired a local Administrative Officer, but she was no longer with the Project. The Project's Data Analyst/Secretary, Ms. Eve Nabong, had assumed many of the responsibilities of the Administrative Officer; however, she had not been present for much of the earlier training that had taken place during a visit by Ms. Barbara Tobin, the Administrative Officer of the Family Planning Management Development Kenya office. In addition, there was a need for administrative systems support and training beyond what was accomplished during Ms. Tobin's visit.

The scope of work covered a range of administrative aspects involved in the smooth functioning of the field office, including the following: orientation of local staff to Management Sciences for Health policies and procedures; ensuring that systems set up in the field were in accordance with the home office; assistance with the setup of a personnel management system; training in the field expense system; training in use of software programs; and ensuring that recruitment and procurement processes were documented. See Annex A for the complete scope of work. Additional tasks were carried out at the request of Ms. Vian, based upon the needs of the office; these included serving as recorder for the Team Planning Meeting and helping to produce the materials for the First Orientation/Planning Workshop for Local Government Units.

III. ACTIVITIES/ITEMS ACCOMPLISHED

Following is a breakdown, in the order of the original scope of work, of activities carried out during the visit of Ms. Lewis.

Field Expenses:

- Assisted with the preparation of the January 1994 field expenses; clarified questions with the Boston office and helped to resolve some outstanding issues with the December 1993 field expenses.
- Provided additional training to Ms. Nabong in processing vouchers, reconciling the checkbook, clearing advances, and other field expense issues (she had a solid foundation from work she had undertaken after the departure of the Administrative Officer).
- Following the format presented in the FPMD Field Expense Manual, began a physical inventory list.

Personnel Management System:

- With input from the Health Finance Development Project, began a Personnel Manual for FPMD/Manila. This included the creation of forms for requests, e.g., Leave Request Form, Approval of Overtime, Request for Taking Computer from Office, etc.
- Using preliminary job descriptions developed at the Team Planning Meeting, worked with each staff person to ensure that the description was accurate and that all revisions had been incorporated.
- Set up timesheet files. Personnel files had already been created, so there was no need to do that.
- Worked with staff to adapt the MSH timesheet, since the local pay schedule is twice a month instead of every two weeks; designed appropriate forms for exempt and non-exempt staff to monitor overtime hours more easily. At the Team Planning Meeting discussed importance of timesheets and how to complete them properly.
- Created spreadsheets to calculate the amount each employee should be paid, so the timesheet data could be entered and the salary would be calculated automatically. The spreadsheet also broke down the direct (project time) and indirect (holiday, sick, vacation) hours to facilitate the appropriate charges on the field expense vouchers.
- Created a schedule of timesheet due dates for 1994, since expatriate and local staff had to submit the timesheets at different times.

Manage purchasing of office furniture and organize setup:

The purchasing of furniture had already been completed before Ms. Lewis' arrival. Ms. Lewis went over the layout with Ms. Vian and provided input as to the setup of the office with the new partitions, location of printer, etc. In order to have the least disruption, the delivery and setup was scheduled for the first week of March, when most of the staff were attending a training workshop away from Manila. Ms. Nabong was instrumental in coordinating this activity.

Procure computer hardware and software and supervise vendor personnel in the setup:

- With Ms. Nabong, requested and reviewed bids for computer hardware systems. Visited vendors to assess systems and made recommendations to Ms. Vian.
- Discussed software needs for the office; this was a somewhat complicated process because some staff had previously used a Windows environment; others had used Macintosh-based systems; and most staff had not used the MSH standard word processing and spreadsheet packages before.
- Was not able to supervise the setup of the computers; delivery was scheduled to coincide with the arrival of the new furniture, and this took place after Ms. Lewis's departure.

Document system of procurement of equipment and furnishings:

Ensured that written bids were submitted for the computer procurement process. The remainder of the documentation process was postponed for the visit of Ms. Ellen Freedman, Contracts Analyst, FPMD/Boston, so that Ms. Lewis could assist in the preparations for the first Orientation/Planning Workshop for LGUs.

Help set up system and train staff in travel advances and expense reporting:

This area was very popular and received a significant amount of attention, as all staff were involved in traveling and/or in processing completed travel expense forms.

Ms. Lewis prepared a presentation for the Team Planning Meeting, which included:

- An explanation of MSH's *Travel Itinerary and Per Diem Report and Request for Expense Reimbursement* forms, and how to complete them; also modified these forms so that only one calculation was necessary to convert dollars to pesos; after that, the forms could be filled out using only local currency amounts.
- Creation and distribution of a handout which summarized the USAID regulations regarding the calculation of per diem, and which included Philippine-specific examples of travel itineraries so that staff could practice filling out the forms and calculating per diems. The handout also covered requests for advance and how to calculate them, as well as how to deduct the appropriate amount from the per diem allowance in cases where meals were provided by the Government.
- An explanation of a new chart, **Local Per Diem Rates**, which was created to simplify the calculations by taking the USAID maximums and converting them to pesos at the current exchange rate.

After the Team Planning Meeting, further work was undertaken in this area:

- Consulted with Mr. Ephraim Despabiladeras, USAID/OPHN, to learn if there were Mission policies and special rates for reimbursing expenses of Government of Philippines counterparts, participant trainees, use of private vehicles (mileage reimbursement), etc.
- Created another modification of the travel expense forms for the use of GOP counterparts serving as consultants to the project, who had to follow somewhat different procedures.

- Drafted **Travel Guidelines for GOP Counterparts** to assist them in completing the travel expense forms.
- Drafted a memo to USAID on behalf of Ms. Vian, requesting approval to reimburse actual expenses (up to the maximum) for GOP counterparts.

Train office staff in the use of analytical, word processing, and presentation software:

- Conducted some one-on-one sessions to demonstrate some of the features of WordPerfect and Quattro Pro.
- More extensive training was not possible, due to workshop preparations and the absence of computers for all staff (procurement process had been begun, but computers were not delivered at the time of Ms. Lewis's visit, as explained above).

Document staff recruitment process for records:

- Ms. Vian had begun a summary chart of the recruitment process; Ms. Lewis expanded and updated it to include additional information.

Develop a checklist of logistical issues to remember for upcoming workshops, based on MSH experience:

- Brought several checklists developed by the MSH's Management Training Program; went over the checklists with Project staff to explain some of the items that were unclear, and provided input for modifying the lists for FPMD. Ms. Eireen Villa, Technical Advisor, and Ms. Nabong devoted a lot of time to this activity as well.

Additional activities not specified in original scope of work:

- *Team Planning Meeting:* Served as recorder for Team Planning Meeting so that all the local staff could participate fully. Produced Minutes of the Team Planning Meeting, including an organizational chart to show how the Project fit in with the Office for Special Concerns. Presented information on administrative matters (see sections above for more detail on material presented).
- *First Orientation/Planning Workshop for LGUs:* Assisted with the preparation of materials for the training workshop, including design and editing of the training calendar/schedule; formatting and editing session guides, worksheets, charts, and budgets for participants; design of the opening program; preparing a budget to determine cash needs for the workshop; and other activities as requested.
- *Assistance with Department of Health statements and briefing papers:* Dr. Steven Solter, MSH Child Survival Advisor, was asked to collaborate in the preparation of DOH position statements, notes for briefing meetings, and the like; these all had to do with family planning and maternal/child health issues. Assisted with typing and creation of graphs for these presentations.

- *Assistance with LGU presentation:* An LGU presentation was developed for use at conferences and meetings. Helped to format the information so that transparencies and handouts could be produced.
- *TDY guidelines and hotel information:* With other MSH staff, visited several hotels to inquire about rates and facilities; began a summary of the hotel information collected; and drafted memo on TDY guidelines for MSH staff who would need the information in the future.

IV. FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS

Ms. Lewis accomplished all of the tasks in the SOW, one exception being the supervision of vendor personnel in setting up the computers as the decision was made to have this work done the week after her departure. The assistance provided by Ms. Lewis built upon and supplemented work accomplished during a previous TDY by the FPMD/Kenya Administrative Officer in helping establish the administrative and financial systems necessary to support FPMD/Manila's program activities.

All basic systems were established, strengthened, or documented, and office staff were trained in their operation. While the systems and trained personnel are now adequate to ensure the smooth functioning of the office and consistency with standard MSH management and reporting requirements, technical support in this area is a continuing need, and some additional work in budget monitoring, refinement of financial procedures, and training is planned as one part of an upcoming FPMD/Operations TDY.

Although Ms. Lewis' trip was not foreseen in the original office set-up plan, FPMD/Boston and the Resident Advisor recognized that establishing a functioning field office in a complex and changing environment places extraordinary demands on the Resident Advisor, and therefore risks a delay in the progress of program activities being initiated at the same time.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

Now that office staff have basic competency in MSH office software, further training should be addressed partly through the purchase of third-party (e.g., Que Corporation) manuals and other instructional materials; such materials will accommodate individual learning and the staff's busy travel schedule, both of which might preclude group training.

In designing and staffing future projects, FPMD should draw upon FPMD/Manila's experience, namely that establishing a fully operational field office requires a high level of initial management and administrative input; sufficient human and financial resources must be allocated to ensure an adequate level of attention to office systems set-up while program, client, and donor needs, to which a Resident Advisor and other technical staff must also

continually respond, are also being addressed. Because the establishment of office systems requires specialized skills which are abundantly available within both FPMD/Boston and MSH/Boston, MSH should continue to involve specialized headquarters staff in assisting resident advisors to establish field offices.

ANNEX A: SOW

SCOPE OF WORK Elizabeth Lewis o/a January 29 - February 25, 1994

Elizabeth Lewis will be travelling to Manila, Philippines o/a January 29 - February 25, 1994 to work with Taryn Vian, FPMD Resident Advisor in the Office of Special Concerns at the Department of Health. The purpose of this travel and TDY is to:

- Assist in field expense reporting, organizing of financial files, writing-up of procedures and approval processes, and starting a physical inventory system.
- Set up a personnel management system, including personnel and timesheet files, forms for requests, and producing a personnel manual.
- Manage the purchasing of office furniture and organize setup.
- Procure computer hardware and software and supervise vendor personnel in the setup.
- Document system of procurement of equipment and furnishings.
- Help set up system and train staff in travel advances and expense reporting.
- Train office staff in the use of analytical, word processing, and presentation software.
- Document staff recruitment process for records.
- Develop a checklist of logistical issues to remember for upcoming workshops, based on MSH experience (i.e., Management Training Program Logistics) and DOH experience.