



Updates from the Field

BEST PRACTICES

No. 5 Series of 2002
<http://www.msh.org.ph>

COLLABORATION BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS AND NGOs FOR BILATERAL TUBAL LIGATION IN NORTH COTABATO

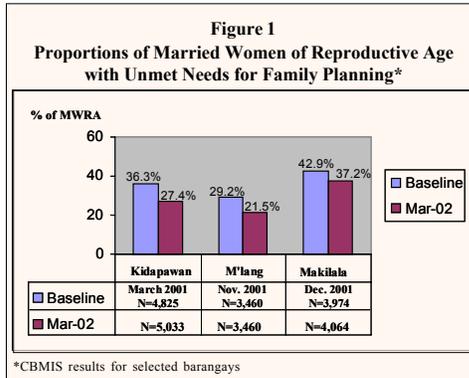
Background

North Cotabato, one of three provinces located in Central Mindanao, has 11 municipalities (of 17) and 1 city enrolled in the Department of Health's Matching Grant Program (MGP). Of these 12, 3, namely, Kidapawan City, M'lang, and Makilala, have linkages with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) for the provision of female sterilization services, which are otherwise available only at the provincial hospital.

Kidapawan City was the first MGP enrollee in the province. It was enrolled in 1999, along with 11 other local government units (LGUs) nationwide. It received an initial grant of Php500,000 (US\$10,000) for the implementation of innovative service delivery interventions and establishment of a community-based monitoring and information system (CBMIS). Meanwhile, M'lang and Makilala were among the 2001 MGP enrollees that received a grant of Php250,000 (US\$5,000) each.

As MGP sites, the three LGUs have been challenged to expand their service coverage through innovative interventions and effective and efficient resource mobilization. Among the strategies adopted by these LGUs is close collaboration with NGOs, which helps them expand their reach and improve program performance, particularly in the area of family planning. It is worth noting that while the numbers and the corresponding proportions of women of reproductive age (MWRA) with unmet needs in the three LGUs are generally on the decline, the numbers of those with unmet needs remain relatively high (Figure 1).

To improve its family planning performance, particularly for female sterilization, Kidapawan City linked up with Friendly Care Foundation, Inc. (FCFI). The FCFI is



a nonprofit NGO that provides high-quality basic health care and family planning services to low-income and lower-middle-income Filipino families.

M'lang and Makilala collaborated with Jerome Foundation, a Davao City-based NGO, to further increase the number of bilateral tubal ligation (BTL) acceptors in their areas. Jerome Foundation, which was founded by philanthropists Frank and Helen Jerome, started out helping people afflicted with polio and those with cleft lip and palate but eventually expanded its services to include BTL.

Collaborating with Friendly Care Foundation: The Experience of Kidapawan City

Realizing the urgency of responding to its clients' unmet family planning needs by promoting the use of permanent methods, the City Health Office joined forces with FCFI to make BTL services available to women in Kidapawan City. In July 2001, representatives from FCFI discussed with the City Health Office the possibility of FCFI deploying a team to Kidapawan City to perform BTL on prospective clients. Based on their agreement, FCFI would require at least 20 clients to organize an outreach service. The city pays FCFI Php200.00 (US\$4) per client served.

The City Health Office undertook preparatory activities before the arrival of the outreach team. *Barangay* (village) Health Workers (BHWs) were dispatched to motivate high-priority clients to undergo BTL. Potential clients were identified based on the Family Profiles generated from the CBMIS survey. The CHO had previously trained its 190 BHWs in family planning counseling to ensure that they impart correct information and messages about family planning methods. The BHWs were given information kits and flip charts for use in their motivation activities. Both initiatives were funded out of the city's MGP grant.

On September 7, 2001, the CHO briefed the prospective clients on the BTL procedure. On the 23rd of the same month, an FCFI team composed of four doctors went to Kidapawan to provide the service. The procedure was performed at the provincial hospital. Of the 18 prospective clients, 5 were disqualified for failure to meet all the screening criteria.

The clients were ferried to the hospital either by a vehicle provided by the barangays or by an ambulance provided by the CHO. The medicines and supplies used and the meals provided to the outreach team and clients were paid for from the matching grant. The city funded the Php200 cost per client out of its regular budget.



MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM
 Department of Health

The CHO intends to invite FCFI again for another outreach activity within the year. Meanwhile, it is in the process of identifying and motivating qualified women to accept the method. Priority clients (married women not using any method or with at least 5 children and considered indigent), however, are immediately referred to the provincial hospital. The cost of BTL, which ranges from PhP400 to 700 (US\$8-14), is shouldered by the LGU using the MGP grant.

Collaborating with the Jerome Foundation: The Experiences of M'lang and Makilala

M'lang's collaboration with the Jerome Foundation for bilateral tubal ligation started in 2000. The Jerome Foundation branched out to provide BTL services at the request of M'lang's Municipal Health Officer (MHO). The MHO, Dr. Roy Firma, saw it as a perfect opportunity to piggyback Operation Tali onto the Foundation's outreach program since the same surgeons could very well perform BTL. Jerome Foundation was amenable to the idea provided there were at least 10 cheiloplasty clients during each outreach. There was no minimum requirement set for BTL clients. In some cases, the Foundation will deploy its team solely for BTL but there should be at least 20 clients to make the outreach activity cost effective. All outreach visits are scheduled on weekends, since the members of the team have their own respective private practices. The doctors receive an honorarium of PhP400 (US\$8) per ligated client from the Foundation.

- Not pregnant
- Using any FP method
- No other medical problems, e.g., hypertension



The Jerome Foundation's outreach team has performed BTL in M'lang on two occasions: one in August 2000 and another in July 2001, where a total of 37 and 35 clients were served, respectively. Two more outreach visits have been lined up for July and December of this year. As of the end of May, some 19 prospective clients had been identified for the July schedule. Tulunan Hospital, a private hospital, served as the venue in 2000 and 2001, while procedures will be done from now on at the M'lang District Hospital.

Makilala, another municipality in North Cotabato, has also recently established a partnership with the Jerome Foundation, upon the recommendation of the MHO of M'lang. The first round of ligation was conducted in April 2002. However, only 4 of the 10 prospective clients showed up and were ligated. Based on information gathered by the health staff, those who failed to come were discouraged by the church from undergoing the procedure.

As in the case of Kidapawan and M'lang, the local government took care of transporting the clients after the operation, using the municipal ambulance. It also provided free postoperative medicines. The Public Health Nurse carried out the presurgical counseling. Makilala plans to ask the Jerome Foundation for another outreach sometime during the third quarter of the year. It had identified at least 20 prospective clients as of the end of May 2002.

Future Initiatives

While partnership with the NGOs is an important dimension of the LGUs' efforts to increase service coverage, the LGUs also realize that they cannot depend forever on external assistance.

In this regard, the Provincial Health Office of North Cotabato has taken the initiative to ensure that the required skills and services are available locally. It is now working towards sponsoring the training of the Municipal Health Officers on male and female sterilization procedures in reputable institutions.

This is in line with the vision of M'lang's MHO of having all MHOs in the province trained in BTL and no-scalpel vasectomy, to form a team that would go around the different municipalities to perform those procedures on interested clients. When that day comes, they will no longer have to depend on outside help to address the unmet family planning needs of their constituents, especially for permanent methods.

As part of M'lang's efforts to adequately respond to the family planning needs of its people, it is also strengthening its interdistrict IUD referral system. Under this system, the Sentrong Sigla-certified Barangay Health Stations (BHSs) are used as referral centers for IUD insertion for a cluster of barangays (district). Midwives trained in IUD insertion and who are considered as among the best are deployed in these BHSs once a week to provide the service.

In addition, the MHO now requires health personnel to record information on family planning method used in the Individual Treatment Record upon consultation. This is one way of monitoring family planning practice among couples and a perfect opportunity to counsel and encourage nonacceptors to use any of the more effective methods. This also enables the MHO to identify and recruit prospective BTL clients.

Meanwhile, Makilala is considering the possibility of working again with Population Services Pilipinas Inc.'s Marie Stopes Clinic in Davao City to provide BTL services to its people, with the provincial hospital as the venue. In the first collaboration between Makilala and PSPI, in 1997, 26 women were ligated.

Resource Requirements

On the Part of Jerome Foundation

- Cost of supplies (PhP1,200/client paid to hospital)
- Honorarium of surgical team

On the Part of the LGU

- Cost of postoperative medicines (in 2000 & 2001, from the regular budget; in 2002, from MGP)
- Transportation, meals, and accommodation of surgical team: 3 surgeons & 1 anesthesiologist (courtesy of either the hospital or the mayor)

First-level recruitment of clients is done by the BHWs. Those recruited by the BHWs are referred to the midwife for individual counseling and then to the Municipal Health Officer for screening and, if necessary, for further counseling. The screening requirements are:

- No postoperative abdominal scar
- Not more than 10% overweight

This publication was made possible through support provided by the U. S. Agency for International Development, under the terms of Contract No. 492-0480-C-00-5093-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S Agency for International Development.

Please address all inquiries to:
Management Sciences for Health

Unit TN No.4, 10/F Times Plaza Building
U.N. Ave cor Taft Ave, Ermita, Manila, Philippines
Tel. Nos: (632) 525-7145/52/56 Fax No.: (632) 525-6086
E-mail: info@msh.org.ph