

Latin America and the Caribbean Unit

Proquali Project
Bahia and Ceará, Brazil

Family Planning Management Development (FPMD)

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Office of Population, USAID

Management Sciences for Health
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Proquali Project Bahia and Ceará, Brazil

Background

In 1996 the Family Planning Management Development (FPMD) Project conducted a management needs assessment of the reproductive health programs of the Ceará and Bahia state secretariats of health in Brazil. The assessment concluded that FPMD support for management development should target not only the state but also health regions and municipal secretariats of health, given the rapid pace of decentralization of the Brazilian public health system. The assessment further noted numerous access and quality of care issues that could not be addressed by management training and technical assistance alone. Consequently, FPMD recommended to USAID/Brazil that integrated interventions in clinical training, information, education and communication (IEC), and management be supported in both states in order to improve access to and the quality of RH care. USAID/Brazil agreed and FPMD took the lead to form a group of USAID Cooperating Agencies to work jointly in Bahia and Ceará. Thus, the Proquali Project was born.

The objective of the Proquali Project is to improve access and quality of reproductive health care in the states of Ceará and Bahia, Brazil, by implementing a sustainable model for provision of client-focused services. The project is being implemented by the State Secretariats of Health in both states with technical assistance from FPMD/Management Sciences for Health, Inc. (MSH).. Johns Hopkins University/Population Communication Services (JHU/PCS) and Johns Hopkins Program for International Education in Reproductive Health (JHPIEGO).

Project strategies include:

- strengthening of the role of non-physicians (nurses, auxiliaries & community health workers) in RH service provision;
- increased user participation in RH services, including strengthening demand for quality services;
- development of an accreditation system that certifies health centers based on quality of care standards for RH defined by the State Secretariats of Health
- integrated technical assistance on the part of USAID Cooperating Agencies in the areas of clinical training, management, and IEC.

Technical Assistance

FPMD/MSH, JHU/PCS and JHPIEGO will provide technical assistance to the State Secretariats of Health during the first 3 years of the Project. During Year I (1997) clinical training,

management and IEC strategies, systems and methodologies that focus on increasing RH service access and quality are being tested in 3 pilot health centers in Ceará and in 2 in Bahia. The health center accreditation system is also being developed. In Year II (1998), the pilot centers will be eligible for accreditation and project activities in the areas of clinical training, management and IEC, including health center accreditation, will be expanded to additional municipalities. During Year III (1999), activities will be expanded throughout both states by the State Secretariats of Health with limited assistance from FPMD/MSH, JHU/PCS and JHPIEGO.

FPMD's specific activities within the Proquali Project focus on:

- provision of management training to state, regional & municipal staff with RH managerial responsibilities
- development of the contraceptive logistics system and training in logistics (in Ceará only)
- empowering health center directors and service providers to focus on the client as they identify service delivery problems and implement solutions; this is being accomplished by providing training in the COPE technique and by introducing the use of client exit interviews to monitor client satisfaction.

To provide training and technical assistance, FPMD has mobilized in-country resources, including experienced Brazilian trainers, private consulting firms, the Federal University of Bahia School of Administration and School of Public Health, and the Ceará State Secretariat of Health School of Public Health.

Benefits

The most innovative aspects of the Proquali Project are the means by which it is seeking to improve access to and quality of RH care, specifically the accreditation system and the integrated form of USAID technical assistance. While many accreditation systems are being implemented throughout the world, almost all are hospital-based. This is one of the first systems to certify RH services provided in out-patient health centers. The integrated approach to USAID technical assistance, whereby specialized Cooperating Agencies unite to contribute to a single project, is also proving extremely effective and may well serve as a future model for technical assistance throughout the world.

Future

By the end of Year III (1999) the Bahia and Ceará State Secretariats of Health will have the capacity to implement clinical training, management and IEC activities that improve access to and the quality of RH care provided in municipal health centers within the context of a decentralized health system. They will also be capable of accrediting municipal health centers that meet state standards for quality of RH care. The offering of technical support in these three areas, together with the certification system, are key to sustaining quality RH services over time and reinforce the role of the state to set standards and regulate health care in a decentralized system.