Strengthening Basic and Continuing Nursing Education in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua & the Dominican Republic, “Project Angels”

**Location:** El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua & the Dominican Republic  
**Focus:** Health, Education, Economic and Social Conditions  
**Organization:** Proyecto Angeles, El Salvador, Ministry of Health, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)  
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**General Information**
The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (MSPAS) of El Salvador, with the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), through the Nursing Unit, has developed projects to strengthen education in nursing. The first was developed in the period from 1997 to 2002 for nurses who worked in the human resource training institutions for nursing and health facilities of the MSPAS of El Salvador. The second was “Training Courses in Third Countries” to develop courses to train nurses of service and teaching of Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic for five years, from 2002 to 2006. The third project, known as “Project Angels”, seeks to meet the needs of basic and continuing nursing education identified by leaders in nursing education and service of Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

**Project Details**
**Project Period:** August 2007–August 2010.  
**Project Extension:** August 2010–August 2011.  
**Target Group:** Nurses, nursing faculty and instructors of health services.

**Outputs**
- The education for nursing teachers and clinical instructors is improved.  
- The activities for standardizing nursing education are planned and implemented (Guatemala and Nicaragua).  
- The cooperation between pre-service and in-service is strengthened.  
- Activities for sustainable development of nursing education are promoted.

**Achievements**
The project used the cascade method of training, with the training strategy implemented in the formation of nursing committees with the two previous projects. The formation and functioning of the nursing committees are considered a very valuable strategy. First, they are a means of invigorating the nurses’ knowledge, skills and attitudes relating to the essence of the practice itself, which is nursing care. They also contribute effectively to maintaining the standards of quality of services provided to the population in the health service establishments in the countries. The products of the work of national committees become the scientific and technical regulations relating to nursing care, which are made official: in each country are converted into administrative tools to standardize the care provided by nursing staff at the national level. This stage is possible only with the intervention of the nurses comprising the local committees. This framework is to improve basic nursing education and training
of teachers. In all four countries, a total of 15 national committees and 47 local committees were trained through initiatives to strengthen the quality of care and nursing education in five thematic areas: (1) sexual reproductive health; (2) curriculum; (3) nursing care process; (4) community nursing; and (5) pre-service in-service.

**Sustainability**

The training in the various thematic components were developed in El Salvador. “Project Angels” included 77 counterparts, who returned to their countries and trained facilitators’ national and local committees according to the thematic component. Each of the 47 local committees are responsible for training nurses in the health facility where their members work.

**Innovation**

The functional organization of the project establishes the formation of the Joint Coordinating Committee. Its members are the Ministers of Health, the Ambassador of Japan with headquarters in El Salvador, the JICA Resident Representative, and nursing leadership of the five countries. This Committee meets annually to review progress of the activities of the authorized annual work plan. It also strengthens the foundation for the sustainability of the actions and functioning of the Committee’s network for scientific and technical exchanges to assist in promoting, protecting and restoring the health of the population.

**Replicability**

The following would be essential to any scaling up of “Project Angels”:
- The participation of officers of the Ministry of Health and JICA in presentations on progress;
- Monitoring of the work of the groups by the Advisory Council;
- Frequent communication through Skype, video conferencing, telephone and advisory and monitoring visits from experts to the five countries;
- Evidence through the products, the level of progress of countries, and the empowerment of the members of the committees;
- The management of financial support to other agencies, such as FU DEN, OPS B. Projections;
- Development of integrated activities in a network of committees, within the five countries;
- Support for the development of national training programmes and exchanges of experiences among the five countries;
- Definitions and Guidelines on nursing care to contribute to the continuous improvement of health services;
- Analysing the training of nursing professionals across the five countries

**Awareness**

The dissemination of information on the progress of the project was carried out in nursing conferences and in technical and administrative meetings at the health facilities where facilitators and counterparts work with national and local committees. In each country, the committees prepare printed materials to promote and disseminate the “Project Angels” activities.