

TropEd Masters Program in International Health (MIH)

Home Institution: Swiss Tropical Institute, Switzerland

Master Thesis

An Evaluation of the Community-Based Health Promotion Programme of the Swiss Red Cross in Shigatse (Tibet)

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September 2007

Abstract

In November 2006, the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) conducted a survey on the health knowledge, attitudes and practice (KAP) among village women in The Shigatse Prefecture, Tibet/China. The aim of the survey was to evaluate the health promotion activities (HP) in five different counties within the Prefecture. These health promotion activities started in 2002 and were carried out in collaboration with the All China Women's Federation (WF). This evaluation is based on a case control study and the Lot Quality Assurance and Supervision (LQAS) method. The survey used in this evaluation included open stakeholder interviews and semi-structured interviews with village women. The interviews were conducted in three counties where the SRC had started the health promotion activities and two counties where the SRC and the WF health promotion activities had not yet commenced. The evaluation shows that there is an immense need for health promotion within the Shigatse Prefecture and that the health knowledge, attitudes, and practice of the village women are inadequate. When comparing the different counties, the survey indicates small differences in terms of health knowledge, attitudes, and practice; however, this cannot be considered significant due to the selected method of inquiry. Overall, the results indicate that the impact of the health promotion activities carried out by the collaborating organizations (SRC and WF), is likely insignificant.

A detailed discussion of the SRC WF programme and a comparison with similar approaches of other projects shows that the programme is based on sound fundamental ideas, but that there is room for improvement on various levels. This evaluation identifies a (very) broad programme, which could coincide more with local beliefs, attitudes and problems. The comparison with similar approaches shows that project with a more significant impact on the outcome used an approach with a higher degree of community participation and/or were more driven by a process of "problem identification" and "problem solving". Hence, one main recommendation on the basis of this evaluation is a revision of the programme in terms of design and content.

The evaluation also indicates that the organizational structures of the WF (the operational partner of the SRC) are largely different among the supervision areas (Xiangs). In some Xiangs the WF has organizational structures that could be an important condition for a more successful implementation of the community-based health promotion activity. Hence, a focus on the existing organizational WF structure in terms of tasks, payment, and supervision of the WF representatives on the different levels, should be a priority of the SRC. Hence, reasonable expectations for future intervention areas, on the part of the SRC, should therefore be explored. Other critical elements in need of exploration are the monitoring and evaluating systems as well as the readiness of the existing health systems. The existing monitoring & evaluation system is only moderate and very difficult to establish and implement under the current conditions in The Shigatse Prefecture. However, a strong monitoring and evaluation system is an essential condition for sustainability. In addition, it remains uncertain if the current health system in the remote areas is ready to provide adequate services.

Overall, the main insight of this thesis is that vast needs generate the temptation to set up broad programmes covering too many different needs, Thus resulting in outcomes, which are likely to be too vague and difficult to define. Hence, if great needs are to be met, it might be vital to concentrate on specific goals and objectives as well as, from time to time, to focus more on the resources than the needs.