RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN FAMILY PLANNING AND HUMAN REPRODUCTION IN INDONESIA

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian family planning program is an integral part of the national development. This program has three broad objectives: (a) to expand contraceptive coverage in accordance with Government targets; (b) to promote continued use of contraception; and (c) to institutionalize family planning and the small family norm concepts.

According to presidential decree number 64 of 1983, BKKBN’s current organization and functions are set forth as a non departamentoal government institution directly responsible to the President, with functions which include formulating general policy for national family planning program and coordinating and supervising its planning and implementation.

At this stage of program development, with almost 20 million married women using contraception, there is an increasing demand for careful planning to face the challenge for assuring a high quality of care. One important effort is to constantly increase the service quality through continuous monitoring against its safety and effectiveness, as well as the evaluation of method, drugs and contraceptive devices offered. It is only through this way both acceptors and the providers will be sure that the method and the service offered are the best with a minimum side-effect for the improvement of health produced.

With this in mind, a research program is an important part of a family planning program and even more important to long-term and continuous program.

For the last 20 years, there has been a significant number of groups, institutes or individual conducting biomedical research in family planning. A great number of them are really useful, whereas others are considered irrelevant for a large national-scale measure and have been occasionally doubtful in terms of their quality. Efforts aiming at ordering a thorough research strategy had not been much conducted until the issues of the Presidential Decree number 64/1983.

Since then a great deal of efforts has been made. ‘Under the aegis of the Deputy for Program Development, three Centers are founded. These are:

1. Center for National Family Planning Policy Development
2. Center for National Family Planning Studies
3. Center for Biomedical and Human Reproduction Research

In its early stage, UNFPA assisted the BKKB in developing research through its research development project. The UNFPA
support was granted with the aids from WHO, through the Special Program for Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction which is known as HRP. With this efforts, the BKKBN invites over Schools of Medicine over the country to establish Study Group which later developed into Human Reproduction Study Groups (HRSGs). With these groups, the BKKBN initiates a collaborating network in the area of family planning. Those eleven Schools of Medicine, are:

1. University of North Sumatra,
2. School of Medicine, Andalas University
3. Sriwijaya University,
4. University of Indonesia,
5. Padjadjaran University,
6. Diponegoro University,
7. Airlangga University,
8. Gajah Mada University,
9. Hasanuddin University,
10. Udayana University and
11. Sam Ratulangi University

II. WHO COLLABORATION WITH BKKBN

The BKKBN was designated as a WHO-collaborating Center in April 1991 although it has been involving in both regional and global studies initiated by the WHO, many of which were multicenter studies since 1981. This collaboration includes:

- Implementation of multi-centered research
- Training
- Technical assistance
- Institutional development
- Other collaboration

Collaborating here refers to totality of the BKKBN research network where 11 Human Reproduction Study Groups (HRSGs) in 11 Medical Schools

Implementation of multi-centered studies

BKKBN has been involved in the implementation of multi-centered studies in family planning and human reproduction. These multi-centered studies range from development of new contraceptives to assessment of post marketing safety, effectiveness and acceptance of the currently used contraceptives. With its large family planning program, various aspects of contraception use can be studied in Indonesia. Thus inclusion of Indonesia as part of the multi-centered can help obtain the picture of contraceptive use worldwide. In the implementation of multi-centered studies, BKKBN always collaborates with HRSGs in various medical schools.

Training

Collaboration also includes training component. In training, WHO serves as executing agency for a project funded by UNFPA. This project provides funds for training of scientist in biomedical aspects of family planning and research methodology and WHO assist in the placement of the candidate. The collaboration has also enable BKKBN to join WHO in the conduct of several international short course in research methodology for the scientists in the region.

Consultative technical assistance

Collaboration in this area mostly relates mostly to the projects jointly executed such as multi-centered studies and implementation of institutional development projects. Eventhough the assistance mainly for the purpose of implementation of the projects, it has indirectly contributed to the improvement of the capacities of BKKBN in various aspects of the research activities including management.

BKKBN has also provided technical assistance for the neighbouring countries who have
collaboration with WHO. Several experts in various professions in medicine currently serve as the members of the steering com- mittees of the Task Forces in HRP.

**Institutional development**

Collaboration for institutional development is done mainly through the Term Institutional Development Grant and UNFPA funded project "Strengthening Biomedical Research in Family Planning". WHO server as executing agency for the UNFPA funded project. Institutional development includes training, provision of laboratory equipment, funding of research project and technical assistance. This component of collaboration has a significant contribution in developing the research capacities.

**Other collaboration**

In developing the human and material resources for research, increasing emphasis is being placed on fostering cooperation between developing countries in the areas of training, research planning and institutional development, the development of technical facilities for research, and collaboration in research projects.

**III. PROGRESS ACHIEVEMENT**

The collaboration has significantly achieved much progress especially in strengthening biomedical research in family planning with all aspects related to it. It has contributed to the improvement of the family planning program. It also has contributed to the development of research capacities in the country as well as establishment of a firm research network both in Indonesia and other countries. The progress so far has also facilitated the implementation of various research in which information of various aspects of fertility regulation attained from it has contribution for the international community.

The collaboration has put Indonesia as one prominent center in the international community in the area of research of fertility regulation. Communication with other countries has been facilitated and many other collaboration has been generated.

**Institutional development**

Being aware of the necessity to earn accurate results and that can provide inputs to decision-makers, a full expertise and ample research facilities are needed. To achieve this, the BKKBN has been striving, aside from collaboration with those study groups, also has the effort to enhance the capabilities of its researchers, such as sending them abroad to study in the area of epidemiology, biostatistics, endocrinology, farmacology and demography-family planning. At the present time, there has been a number of 19 researchers that have been sent to study abroad for this purpose. In addition, in-country training in the form of short-term course has been conducted. There has been a number of 15 researchers that has been trained in the area of epidemiology. Training for laboratory staff has also been conducted and up to this dates there has been trained 7 persons in the area of managing radioimmuno-essay laboratory. Short-term training for research management has also been conducted.

In order to upgrade research facilities, there laboratories for PIA has been founded in three School of Medicines; these are:
1. University of Indonesia
2. University of North Sumatra and
3. Airlangga University

Beside their activities as the group members, those study groups have also established their own initiatives, with the assistance of
respective dean. Many of these group already have their own/separated office furnished with research facilities such as computers and some other facilities. In the aspect of organization, those group have become established in the fact that many of them have their own secretariete with some kind of long-term work plan. Aside from their research activities, those group have been able to support and up-grade the staff capability of the Medical Faculty by conducting a number of training in a variety of disciplines. In the meantime a number of names has been cited in research ranked internationnally.

In the consecutive development the role those research groups has increased. With the enhancement of the coordination function at the provincial level, the role of those groups has become more prominent. These group become a counterpart of the BKKBN both at the provincial and central level. Better communication between researchers and program managers has brought the program to a new era where more and more policy has been decided paying attention to the results of research and a variety of scientific information. This fact bring about good results.

In addition to BKKBN and Medical Schools, WHO through its Human Reproduction Program has supported those research development in Indonesia. Who has assisted through a variety of support, such as consultative technical assistance, LID grant and research fund. In addition WHO also has assisted in the organizational development of research.

Implementation of research

Studies conducted has increased both in terms of quantity and quality. At the present, studies coordinated by the BKKBN in the area of biomedical and family planning have reached a number of 16 studies consisting of a variety of contraceptive methods. In addition to this, research network also conduct various research in human reproduction and family planning which are coordinated by the WHO-Geneva, which at the same time, involves a number of countries. By this way, both for domestic and foreign use, research collaborating network in Indonesia has presented a significant number of contribution. Some noteworthy of noting and attract worldwide attention has been the studies on Norplant, in which Indonesia represents the largest users whom other countries could turn to. Aside from this, Indonesia has also involved in developing new contraception methods, such as male contraception, occlusion, monthly injectables contraception, and studies on the safety of relatively new contraceptive method such as Norplant.

BKKBN has flourished in such that its ability to coordinate and to conduct research has become more convincing and to conduct research has become more convincing and brings about a number of results. A lot of unnecessary overlapping has been avoided. Information shortages can be filled thanks to the good coordination. Coordination with various goverment agencies and research institutions which are in close relationship with health services and family planning as well as with reproductive health has been established accordingly. A variety of consultative forum have been conducted aiming at gaining better results. Forum that involves a variety of international institutes has also given good results. The quantity and quality of researcher have been enhanced. As an coordinating board, coordination function has been accomplished.

At the present, the BKKBN has the capability to act as a coordinator of data management. In some multi-centered studies their data management is being accomplished by BKKBN. Even though there still be necessary
to recruit outside consultants, its function as a coordinator can be accomplished accordingly. In addition to this, consultative support are being managed to be given to some neighboring countries in the area of research.

With more and more the ability in doing research, various international institutes, have given a number of a mutualistic collaboration. A variety of international activities have been conducted in Indonesia, among others, meeting of scientific committee and international training. This has widened their perspective toward Indonesia.

**Technical assistance**

Technical assistance is another another aspect in the collaboration. Most of the consultative technical assistance is related to various research projects jointly conducted. Everthough the emphasis is for the purpose of the research projects, it has contributed to the development of capabilities of the scientists involved, including research management. BKKBN gained from a more advanced techniques in research applied in various studies implemented, while WHO learned the focal situation which can be used in other future studies. In collaboration with WHO BKKBN has provided technical assistance to the other countries. In the last 5 years BKKBN has sent 7 experts to Vietnam to assist them in the development of research proposals and the conduct of studies.

It is worthwhile to note that several experts in family planning is now joint WHO as the member of steering committees in various task forces in HRP, WHO.

**Other collaboration**

Collaboration between development countries in the area of research has been initially pioneered. Exchange in visits for exploration this possibilities has been stated and some proposed collaboration plants will soon be conducted. This fact has been in accordance with the promise made by the Government of Indonesia to support the idea of South-to-South collaboration.

Early this year, three BKKBN officials visited the People's Republic of China to explore the possibility of collaboration in research. As the response three officials from the People's Republic of China has visited Jakarta and one of the HRSGs for the similar purpose. Collaboration with Vietnam in fact has been done. However each of the activities were not put under a South-to-South Collaboration umbrella. A comprehensive collaboration is yet to be made.

In general much has been gained from the collaboration of course this is not without problems. There are problems occur in the collaboration i.e. communication, bureaucratic constraint, and availability of resources, but so far it can be resolved and does not impede the achievement of the progress.

**IV. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

Most of the activities in the coming year will be similar to that of current year. Not much will be added to the existing activities. South-to-South Collaboration will get more attention in the coming year. South-to-South Collaboration actually has been established with other developing countries if family planning program. Collaboration is expected to expand. Research is sought especially in the introduction of new contraceptive into the national family planning program of a particular country and when quality improvement is needed.

The other plan for the coming year is the improvement of the mechanism in the collaboration. The constraint and various
problems in existing mechanism should be improved in order to increase the efficiency. Emphasis will be given to the management aspect of research, especially in the HRSGs. The HRSGs will be encouraged to involve junior scientists in the research activities.

Research on improvement of Quality of Care in the family planning program will be prioritized. This is in agreement with the policy of the national program which put emphasis on the quality of services.

To realize the coming year plan, support is needed, both for funds and technical assistance. In this matter, role of the SEARO is needed to facilitate the collaboration with donor agencies, and other international agencies working in the area of research in family planning.