

WHO/PAHO/CUBA Child Healthcare Workshop
at Havana, Cuba 28-29 June 2010
Summary for success of the Child Health Outcomes in Cuba
Some Recollections by Chok-wan CHAN after the Meeting

Background: Severe financial and resources constraints due to

1. Political Isolation
2. Financial Embargo by outside world
3. Lack of foreign currency for trade

Key Factors of Success

1. Political solidarity of citizens
2. Need for Self Help
3. Ideology of “children are our future” and “healthy children for healthy world”
4. Financial input into child health is an investment and not an expense
5. High leverage of child health investment (ratio of 1:7)
6. Political Will of Government (keen to show good results to the world)
7. Head Office of the Maternal and Child Health Services situates just next to the Office of the President
8. Every maternal death case is carefully scrutinized by special officer responsible and answerable directly to the President
9. Comprehensive Health Policy for the children by the Ministry of Health
10. Importance of Primary Health Care as priority in providing seamless and integrative services with hospital pediatrics
11. Avoid unnecessary use of high-tech investigations such as MRI, CT Scan etc (US experience 80% utilization of high tech due to mitigating medicine while the corresponding incidence in Cuba only 20%) saving money for developing other basic healthcare programmes
12. Importance of preventive medicine such as nutrition, developmental surveillance, immunization, newborn screening, genetic counseling and others.
13. Integration of three major sectors of child health: medical, social and education
14. Good partnership between child health care workers including pediatricians, obstetricians and gynecologists, child health related medical specialists, nurses, midwives and other allied health professionals.
15. Professionals are dedicated to their job. They are all ready for emergency calls irrespective of their duty rosters and never ask for overtime pay.
16. Good community support with self help of citizens themselves

17. Effective system for transferring patients from rural to urban referral centres
(flying squads available if indicated)
18. Health education of the public
19. Self production of antibiotics and vaccines for home consumption and for use at
developing countries at low cost
20. Strict supervision of vital statistics for child health to ensure accurate outcome
measures.
21. Regular review of health outcomes jointly by the government and professionals
22. Others